AFTER THE BATTLE

THE ALEUTIANS

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CONTENTS

THE ALEUTIANS
The Air Raid on Dutch Harbour 1
The Aleutians Today 14
Attu Forty Years After 21
IT HAPPENED HERE
Known to God, Unknown to Man 28
50 YEARS AGO
The Munich Crisis 32
PRESERVATION
Time Warp in Tubney Wood 40
SPECIAL INVESTIGATION
Back to the Bunker 43

Front Cover: The forgotten battleground of the Aleutians. This gun turret was pictured on Long Island, Kodiak, by Erwin Thompson in 1983. Background Cape Winslow, Unalaska, by Jim Stuhler.

Centre Pages: The Chancellery gardens housing estate takes shape in East Berlin in August 1988 before the last half of the Führerbunker in the centre was demolished.

Back Cover: The State High School for Music — the former Führerbau — in Munich where the Four-Power Agreement was signed in November 1938. (Karel Margry)

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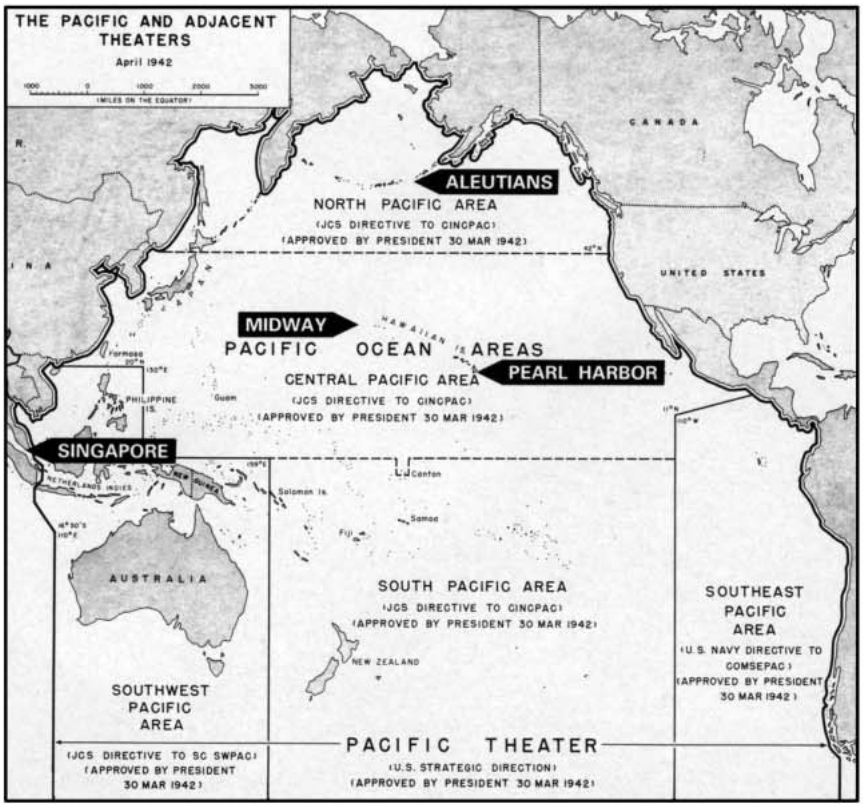
THE ALEUTIANS

Early in World War II the United States Territory of Alaska was largely undefended. In September 1939 its military population numbered less than 600 men. Three hundred soldiers were stationed at Chilkoot Barracks near Haines in the south-east corner of the Territory where landings were highly unlikely. The barracks had been established to serve police functions in the control of the gold rush, not to defend Alaska or support any offensive action. Another 200 soldiers were spread around the Territory operating the Alaska (Army) Communications System. The Navy had some small detachments including a naval radio station and aerology unit at Dutch Harbor. Patrolling the Alaskan waters were a few Coast Guard vessels.

What is surprising is not the limited military presence in Alaska at this time but that there were such meagre defences for one of the points of the defensive triangle Alaska/Panama/Hawaii protecting the United States. The priority in defence spending went to Hawaii and Panama, with Alaska ignored as an area too inhospitable to attack. Those calling for more attention to Alaskan defences pointed however to the strategic location of the Territory on the Great Circle Route and to aviation being able to overcome natural defences or barriers. The advocates of increased military spending for the area were to prevail — 1939 saw the start of a real increase in military construction in Alaska. The naval air station at Sitka went into operation and a naval base was under construction at Kodiak plus an airbase at Fairbanks. In June 1940 construction was begun at Anchorage for a second major airbase. The Sitka and Kodiak contract was modified to include a third naval facility at Dutch Harbor, a sheltered harbor on Unalaska Island in the eastern Aleutians. This was to be the major base in the Islands.



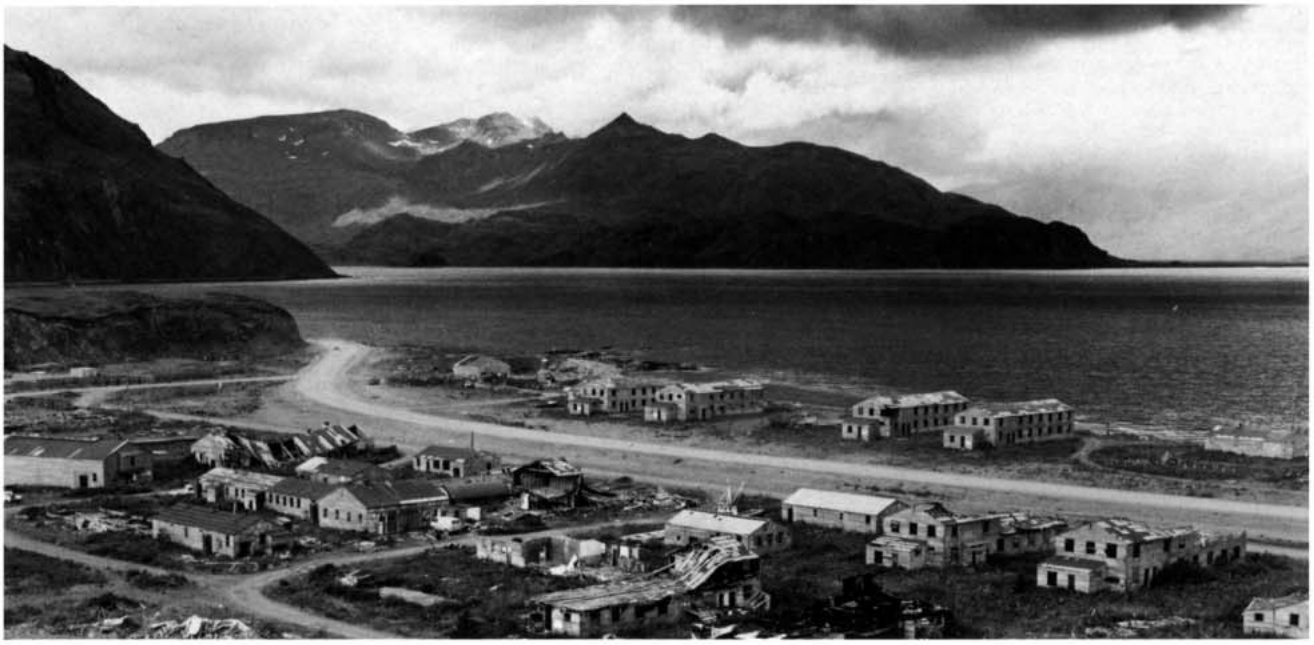
Following the entry of the United States into the war, and the fall of Singapore foreshadowing the loss of Java and Sumatra, urgent consideration had to be given to the management of the Pacific War. Discussions in February and March 1942 between the interested parties — Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, led to the agreement of the respective governments for splitting the world into theatres: the Indian Ocean and Middle East under UK direction and the Pacific under that of the United States. (Europe was to be managed under joint control of Britain and America.) This map shows the areas agreed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Aleutians falling within the North Pacific Area. (Note: CINCPAC = Commander in Chief Pacific Area.)

THE AIR RAID ON DUTCH HARBOUR

BY D. COLT DENFIELD

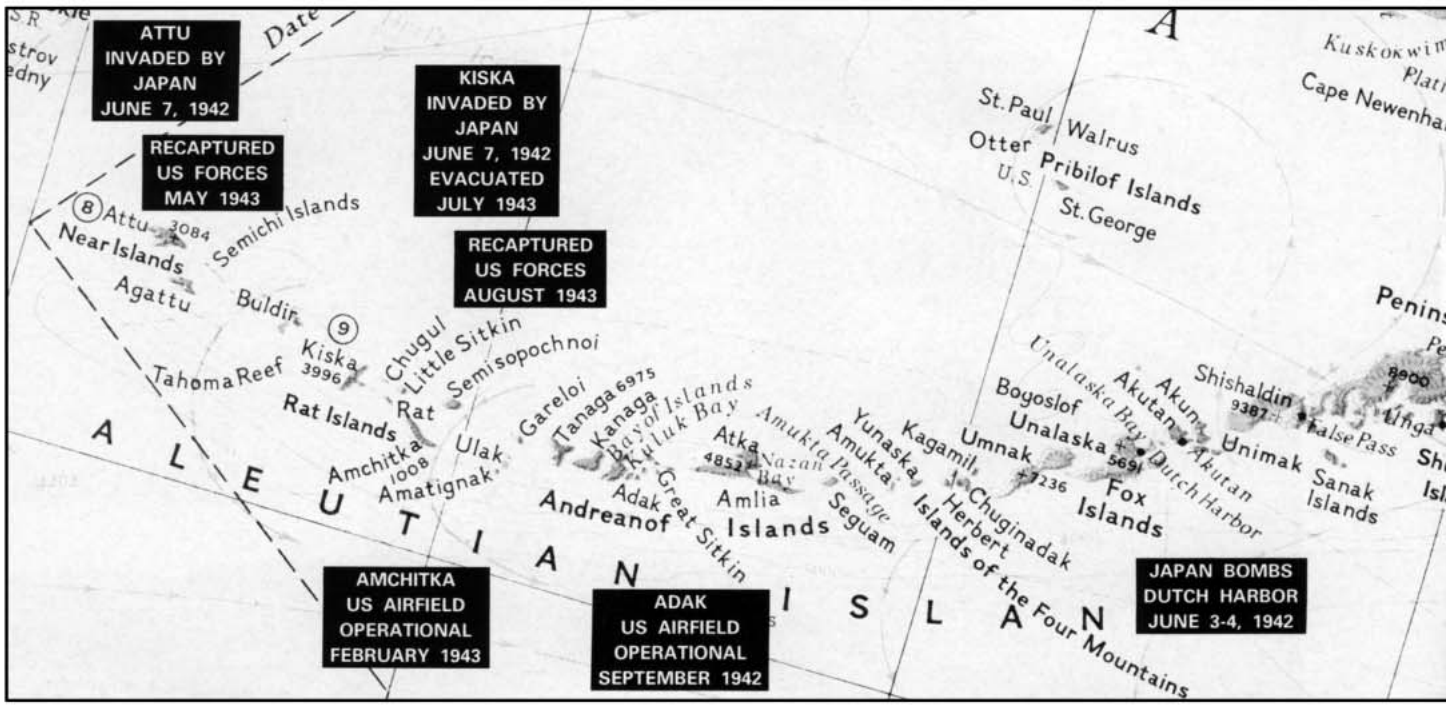
Dutch Harbor was not necessarily the best location. The disadvantages of Unalaska included an absence of suitable land for a fighter airfield; the harbour had shortcomings regarding the movement of surface craft, and a base further west would have had more strategic value. Yet for such a base to have been sited westwards in the Aleutians might have appeared to the Japanese as an aggressive move — and in late 1940 such moves were avoided.

The Alaska Defense Command numbered about 20,000 men when Japan launched the Pacific War in December 1941. At Anchorage construction of the airbase at Fort Richardson was essentially complete, as were staging fields at Annette Island, Yakutat, Elmendorf and Ladd. Army garrisons existed at Sitka, Kodiak, Dutch Harbor, Seward, Nome and Chilkoot. Five airfields along the north-west staging route in Canada were provisionally usable. The day war broke out, however, there were only eighteen combat aircraft capable of taking to the air; the air warning system was not operable; transport, armour, artillery, ordnance and matériel were all in short supply. (At Alaska's main naval base, Kodiak, for instance, there was sufficient ammunition for batteries to fire for a mere 17 minutes.) The



Top: **Fort Mears under attack during the first Japanese bombing run on June 3, 1942. Two barracks are blazing on the right side of the photograph and three warehouses burning to the left of the bombed barracks. (US National Archives)**

Above: **The ghost town of Fort Mears in August 1984 having been abandoned since 1946. The trench system on this hillside has also deteriorated over the years but one particular shelter is dry and well preserved. (Stuhler, US Army Corps of Engineers)**



The Pacific War's most northerly battlefield — the Aleutians — where the unpredictable forces of nature were just as much an enemy. Although situated at the same latitude as Britain, the landscape is treeless and inhospitable and the weather amongst the worst in the world. Winds of over 100 mph are common with widespread fog, low cloud, rain, snow and frequent severe storms. Attu and Kiska were invaded by Japanese forces, as part of the diversion plan for the assault on Midway, but were occupied for less than a year. The salient features of the Aleutian campaign are highlighted.

means for mounting an active defence of the Territory were sparse.

The main problem in early 1942 for the defence of Dutch Harbor was that the bases on Unalaska were still in their infancy. Construction at Dutch Harbor had only begun in November 1940 as a supplementary addition to the Navy contract for the building of bases at Sitka and Kodiak. All three bases were to be built by a civilian contractor, Siems Drake Puget Sound Company, but, after the attack at Dutch Harbor, naval construction battalions (Seabees) were deployed to complete the work.

By mid-1942 a dramatic build-up in Alaska troop strength had been accomplished. From being weakly defended at the time of Pearl Harbor, by May 1942 there were 45,417 troops at bases around the Territory. The bases at Kodiak, Sitka and Dutch Harbor were operational if as yet incomplete. The problem of stationing pursuit aircraft to defend Dutch Harbor had been partially solved by the construction (unknown to the Japanese) of airstrips on Umnak Island at Fort Glenn and on the Alaska Peninsula at Cold Bay.

The naval station at Dutch Harbor was functioning, with most of the docks built or under construction; there was a seaplane facility and submarine docking, and in June the increased establishment numbered over 6,000 plus those on ships in the harbour. Army strength was 5,430, comprising troops of the 37th Infantry Regiment (Separate), 206th Coast Artillery, 151st Engineers (Combat) and supporting elements from the Medical Corps and Quartermaster Corps. A Marine detachment provided additional firepower to guard the bases should Japanese landings be attempted.

The build-up of Army strength in Alaska had not been matched with a suitable expansion of the aircraft warning system. There was a mobile radar at Fort Richardson in Anchorage and a permanent installation at Cape Chiniak, Kodiak. The radar on Unalaska at Cape Wislow was installed in such a way that it was useful only for tracking surface craft. When the Japanese attacked, this defensive weakness was to enable the intruders to approach within 20 minutes of Dutch Harbor before they were detected and to arrive over the base before identification. An air warning system at Cape Wislow did not become a reality until afterwards.

The Japanese Aleutians operation was only one element of a larger and complex Midway operation. The various parts of the Midway plan as developed by Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, who had planned the daring operation at Pearl Harbor, were designed to accomplish two main goals: to capture Midway Island and to engage and destroy the United States Pacific Fleet. The capture of Midway Island would give the Imperial Navy a guard station more distant from the home islands of Japan and block future American operations west of Midway. Yamamoto wanted to be sure that the home islands would not come under aerial attack again as they had in the Doolittle raid of April 1942. Midway could also serve as a staging area for a possible invasion of Hawaii. Japanese plans for the Hawaiian Islands were tentative, awaiting the destruction of the Pacific Fleet, but could include an invasion and occupation. The primary concern of the Midway operation was the confrontation and destruction of the Pacific Fleet — the uncompleted goal of the Pearl Harbor attack and fundamental objective of the Imperial Navy.

The Aleutians element of the plan would prevent the use of the chain in any American drive towards the Kuriles or Hokkaido. The naval base at Dutch Harbor was to be neutralised, followed by the destruction of the base which was wrongly thought to exist at Adak. The Japanese then planned to move westwards and occupy the islands of Attu and Kiska until late autumn. If the Pacific Fleet was sent north to defend the Alaskan Territory, a screening force would be waiting; if the fleet made for Midway, Japanese warships would be on line to intercept.

Admiral Yamamoto seems to have had complete confidence in the Midway plan and may have been afflicted with the same overconfidence that authors writing of Midway term the 'victory disease'. The complexity of the plan called for deploying the might of the Combined Fleet in various forces according to a carefully orchestrated grand design which left little room for reaction to developments. All the intricate arrangements to lure the Pacific Fleet into a 'decisive' battle depended upon the Americans responding in the way that they were expected to.

Yamamoto, however, was unaware that the Japanese naval code had been broken. By mid-May the Pacific Fleet's commander, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, possessed a general outline of the Midway/Aleutians operation courtesy of the code-breakers and by May 28 nearly all the details, enabling him to deploy his own carriers to seek out the Japanese carrier force in the van of the Midway invasion, whilst avoiding being drawn into the very action that the more powerful Japanese battle groups sought.

Commanding the Aleutians element was Vice-Admiral Moshiro Hosogaya; his forces five naval groups: a Northern Force Main Body, the 2nd Carrier Striking Force, Attu Landing Force, Kiska Landing Force, and a Submarine Detachment. The 2nd Carrier Striking Force (the 1st would be at Midway) was assigned the task of neutralising Dutch Harbor — of leaving the base in ruins. In command of the carrier group was Rear-Admiral Kakuji Kakuta on the carrier *Ryujo* as his flagship. The other carrier in the force was *Junyo* and the remaining ships were the heavy cruisers *Takao* and *Maya*, destroyers *Akebono* and *Sazanami* and oiler *Teiyo Maru*.

The *Ryujo* (Prancing Dragon) was a 590-foot-long carrier with stowage for 48 aircraft. Her operational strength comprised 16 A6M Zero fighters under the command of Lieutenant Minoru Kobayashi and 21 B5N2 Kate bombers under the command of Lieutenant Masayuki Yamagami, who was also the air unit commander for both sections.

The *Junyo* (Free Flying Falcon) had been commissioned just in time for the Aleutians operation. *Junyo* was larger than the *Ryujo*, at 718 feet in length, with stowage for 53 aircraft. On her trip to the north she carried

only 45 aircraft, 22 Zeros and the remainder Val D3A1 dive bombers. The air unit commander was Lieutenant Shizue Ishii, the leader of the Zero fighter group; leading the Val group was Lieutenant Zenji Abe.

Together the *Ryujo* and *Junyo* had a total of 82 aircraft on board, compared to the 354 with the four carriers of the 1st Carrier Force at Midway. The Kate could carry up to 800kg of bombs; the Val two 60kg bombs or one 50kg. If Admiral Kakuta could neutralise Dutch Harbor with this small carrier force it would certainly be to his credit.

The Attu occupation force, under the command of Rear-Admiral Sentaro Omori on the light cruiser *Abukuma*, included in addition to the flagship four destroyers, *Wakaba*, *Nenohi*, *Hatsuharu* and *Hatsushimo*, and the troop transports *Magane Maru* and *Kinugasa Maru* loaded with 1,200 Army troops. The commander of these troops was Major Matsutoshi Hozumi.

For the occupation of Kiska, the 10,380-ton ex-liner *Hakusanmaru* and the 7,508-ton freighter *Kumagawamaru* carried the 550 men of the 3rd Special Naval Landing Force, led by Lieutenant-Commander Hikumi Mukai, along with 700 pioneers and equipment. The other ships of the group included the *Kiso* — flagship of Captain Takeji Ono, in command of operations — and the *Tama* from the 21st Cruiser Division; the three members of the 6th Destroyer Division, the *Akatsuki*, *Hibiki* and *Hokaze*; the armed merchant cruiser *Asakamaru* (four 5.9-inch guns); plus three auxiliaries from the 13th Minesweeper Division, the *Hakubomaru*, *Kaihomaru* and *Shunkotsumaru*.

The Submarine Detachment was to carry out reconnaissance of the Aleutians, then two of the submarines were to sail to the West Coast for duty there, while three remained in the Aleutians to form a picket line.

Nimitz, knowing the intentions of the Japanese in the Aleutians, faced some difficult decision making. He was inclined to let the Aleutians make do with the forces already there. With what the Japanese were taking to the islands they were not much of a threat and their offensive in the chain would lead nowhere. To ignore an American territory was not an attractive option, though, leading to a decision to form a North Pacific Force for the defence of the Aleutians. Rear-Admiral Robert A. Theobald was selected to command this force.

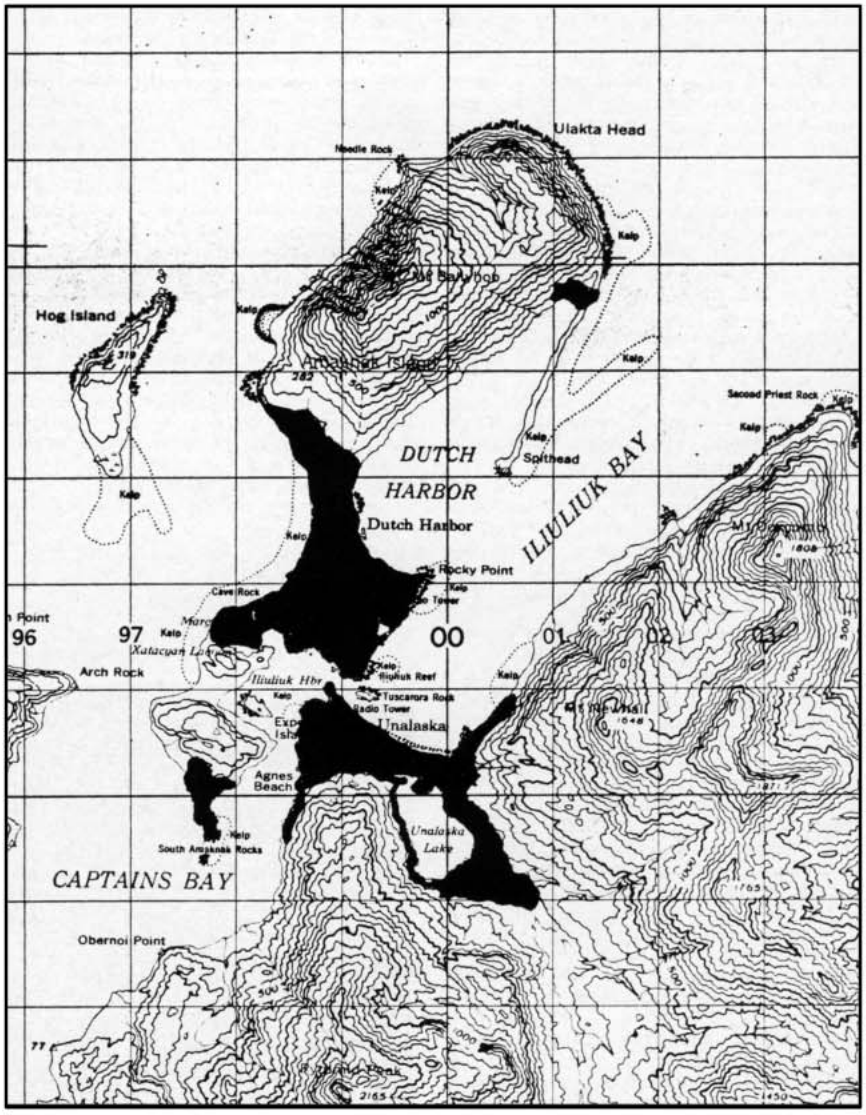
The North Pacific Force could not be a powerful group as Nimitz had so few ships available. It was to include ships pulled out of the Central Pacific and incorporated the existing Alaskan Sector Command with its collection of converted fishing boats, the gunboat *Charleston* with four 6-inch guns, two Coast Guard cutters, three Coast Guard patrol boats and a couple of old destroyers. Altogether, its principal battle strength comprised five cruisers, thirteen destroyers, six submarines and various support vessels but no carriers. Admiral Theobald selected the cruiser *Nashville* as his flagship. Joining the *Nashville* in the Main Body were the heavy cruisers *Indianapolis* and *Louisville*, cruisers *St Louis* and *Honolulu*, destroyers *Gridley*, *McCall*, *Gilmer* and *Humphreys*. Aerial search for the North Pacific Force was assigned to a task group of twenty PBYs of Patrol Wing 4 and one B-17. The Air Striking Group included on June 3: twenty-one P-40s, six B-26s and two B-18s at Cold Bay; twelve P-40s and six B-26s at Umnak; fifteen P-39s, seventeen P-40s, five B-17s and two LB-30s at Kodiak. The five Kodiak B-17s and one LB-30 were flown to Cold Bay on June 4.

Submarines stood patrol duty, with *S-27* and *S-28* on station west of Cold Bay, *S-18* and *S-35* at the southern entrance of Umnak Passage, and *S-23* and *S-24* at the north end of Umnak Passage.

Since there was a remote possibility of the Japanese surprising the bases at Dutch Harbor with an amphibious landing, a group of nine destroyers under the command of Commander Wyatt Craig was scheduled for duty at Makushin Bay, Unalaska. As of June 3 three of the destroyers, *King*, *Waters* and *Talbot*, had yet to arrive. The *Talbot* was at Dutch Harbor and the *King* and *Waters* were en route, arriving on June 4.

Theobald was briefed on the situation in the Aleutians and told that intelligence reports indicated that the Japanese would launch an air strike at Dutch Harbor and that landings at Adak, Attu and Kiska could be expected. Theobald, doubting the accuracy of the intelligence reports, deployed his forces about 450 miles south of Kodiak in accordance with his view that the Japanese might attempt landings in the eastern Aleutians or Alaska mainland rather than at Attu or Kiska. By ignoring the intelligence information and following his intuition Theobald had stationed his ships hundreds of miles away to the south-east of Admiral Kakuta's carriers on course for Unalaska, which put them completely out of what happened.

Not surprisingly the strongest criticism of Theobald's acting upon a hunch has come from the intelligence community, and in a recent book the former officer in charge of the Pacific Fleet's intelligence staff, Edwin T. Layton, was especially critical. Others



A prerequisite to the occupation of Attu and Kiska at the western end of the chain was an attempt by carrier-borne Japanese aircraft to knock out the main US base at Dutch Harbor on the northern side of Unalaska Island.

Fort Mears after the raid on June 3, 1942 with fires nearly burnt out. Photograph was taken from a gun position that received a direct hit killing one soldier. The BOQ (Bachelor Officer Quarters) below the hillside gun position was splattered with mud and the windows blown out. (National Archives)

look at it from the point of view of what might have happened if Theobald's forces, with no carriers, had encountered the advancing fleet — at least he had safely placed his ships out of reach. The same might be said for the picket ships of the Alaskan Sector — that it was lucky they did not discover the Japanese as a confrontation would have found the Japanese with a dramatic advantage.

The 2nd Carrier Force arrived at their launch position, about 150 to 200 miles south-west of Unalaska, at 2.10 a.m. on June 3. The early morning light meant that aircraft could be launched as early as 2.30 a.m. but fog delayed the take-offs to shortly after 3.15 a.m. Even when the fog lifted, flying conditions were bad, with a low cloud ceiling.

Lifting off the flight deck of the *Ryujo* for Dutch Harbor were six Zeros and eleven Kates and off the *Junyo* twelve Vals and six Zeros. They set out independently as the low cloud prevented formation flight. The aircraft from the *Junyo* experienced navigational problems and were forced back to their carrier. That they managed to find it and regain it safely was something of an accomplishment but still a disappointment for the crews and Kakuta. At take-off one of the Kates from the *Ryujo* crashed into the sea but the crew were recovered.

The eventual discovery of the carrier force early that morning fell to the task group of Patrol Wing 4, when the ships were sighted from a PBY with Lieutenant Jean Cusick at the controls, but he and his crew were shot down before they could radio their location. This was the first in a series of frustrating Patrol Wing 4 encounters with the Japanese. There were more sightings and, the following day, bomb attacks on the carrier forces by aircraft of the patrol wing and the striking group, but none of the ships were damaged.

When the six Zeros and ten Kates arrived at Dutch Harbor they found clear weather with a 3,000-metre cloud ceiling, which enabled them to select targets and form up for their bombing runs. They did not, however, have detailed or accurate information on the Dutch Harbor bases. There was no agent on the scene and one sent there in the mid-1930s had been arrested along with an aide before he could relay information even on the few naval facilities that existed at the time. (Thus when the fleet was in, during exercises, some of the sailors at any rate were not at all pleased at what agent Shimuzu's capture meant for them, for the aide had been none other than that historically well-placed source: the local prostitute!). Intelligence data collected in the Aleutians by 'planners' for the Tokyo/San Francisco Goodwill Flight of 1931, almost a decade before military expansion in the area, was not that helpful in 1942. Shortly before the raids a limited periscope reconnaissance was completed by submarine *I-19*.

Dutch Harbor meanwhile had been on alert since April, with invasion and attack warnings issued on May 28 and 30. The last warning ordered the bases to maximum alertness from May 30 to June 4. The Army was instructed to establish defensive perimeters and to remain on the alert, with ammunition to hand. The Navy ordered liberty and shore leave reduced to a level that would maintain maximum defensive readiness. All men in exposed locations were instructed to wear steel helmets. Anti-aircraft guns were readied, with supplies of ammunition moved to the magazines at each gun position.

Preparations for the defence of the naval station were put under the administration of Lieutenant Commander T. C. Thomas. He established a demanding programme of a thorough day's work and then chemical warfare training, rifle instruction and aircraft identification practice. The base personnel were busy ten to twelve hours every day. All the rifles at the naval station were issued, with sixty rounds of ammunition apiece. Another 200 rifles were borrowed from the Army and issued to sailors. Air raid drills were held and duties assigned; one aspect that Thomas noted as he improved the station's readinesss was the need for dispersed shelters for men on fire watch.

With the May 30 alert movies and other events that congregated people were discontinued. The large mess hall was closed and field kitchens opened. Many slept in their dugouts and battle stations or at dispersed shelters. Reveille was moved forward to 3.00 a.m. and battle stations were manned from 4.30 to 6.00 a.m. If no attack had materialised by then, the base was declared secure and the day's routine resumed.

The Army was equally busy at its Margaret Bay garrison, Fort Mears. The defensive trenches were finished and troops assigned to the concrete pillboxes sited around the garrison. Where this force differed from the naval station was in not having the broad administrative responsibility for defensive preparations entrusted to one man, and planning suffered by comparison. Units at Fort Mears had been well briefed and organised as to their duties during any alerts — not so, however, elements of the 37th Infantry Regiment (Separate) and the 151st Engineers (Combat) which arrived at Dutch Harbor on June 2 aboard the Army Transport *President Fillmore*. They were not placed on alert and some of them were to be caught at their barracks as the bombs fell the next morning.

Certain deficiencies in the defence of Dutch Harbor had been pointed to in a report by Commander P. F. Foster, USNR, after an inspection carried out in mid-May, but shortages of materiel and time prevented their correction. In general Commander Foster found the bases to be in a state of infancy, far from complete or ready. The outstanding defect was the absence of fighter aircraft protection; the nearest fighters being at Fort Glenn on Umnak. By the time the

View from the gun position today with most of Fort Mears gone. The building at the edge of the hill is a modern office. (Stuhler)

A bomb intended for the Naval Radio Station hit an empty Quonset hut completely demolishing the structure. (National Archives)

fighters were able to get to Dutch Harbor, considerable damage could be wrought, and the 70-odd miles that they had to travel meant the use of precious fuel in 'getting to work'. Cold Bay was too far distant to be of much assistance. Foster urged the construction of a limited fighter strip with catapult and arresting gear at Dutch Harbor — an improvement that was realised after the raids.

Foster discussed in his report the lack of live fire practice among the Army 37mm and 3-inch anti-aircraft gun crews. The explanation was that ammunition had been in short supply and that there were no target sleeves. The guns had been emplaced since the summer of 1941 but the crews had not been given the opportunity to fire at targets.

Another inadequacy was the Army radio network with Fort Glenn and Cold Bay. The radio system was not powerful enough to ensure that the receivers at the airbases would pick up messages from Dutch Harbor.

Looking around the bases Foster noted an absence of camouflage netting; that fuel tanks were highly visible, and the barracks and hospital at Margaret Bay in their standard ivory paint schemes presented an easy target. He also noted that the barracks and hospital were congested and of wood frame construction and therefore highly flammable, and while observing the base activities he concluded that too much energy had been expended on construction rather than training.

Positive results as reported by Foster were Army and Navy co-operation and the extensive construction of defensive trenches, shelters and pillboxes.

Ten minutes had passed and the Zeros had completed strafing, hitting only two or three PBYs and destroying one of them. The bombers were now ready to swing into action, releasing their first bombs at 5.55 a.m. with congested Fort Mears their target. The first two bombs missed the garrison and fell harmlessly into Unalaska Bay. The next of them, however, hit and destroyed two barracks, buildings Nos. 864 and 866, killing twenty-five of the troops that had only arrived the day before. Three warehouses on the edge of Margaret Bay were also hit, their contents destroyed. A cold storage building, a Quonset hut and orderly room were damaged.

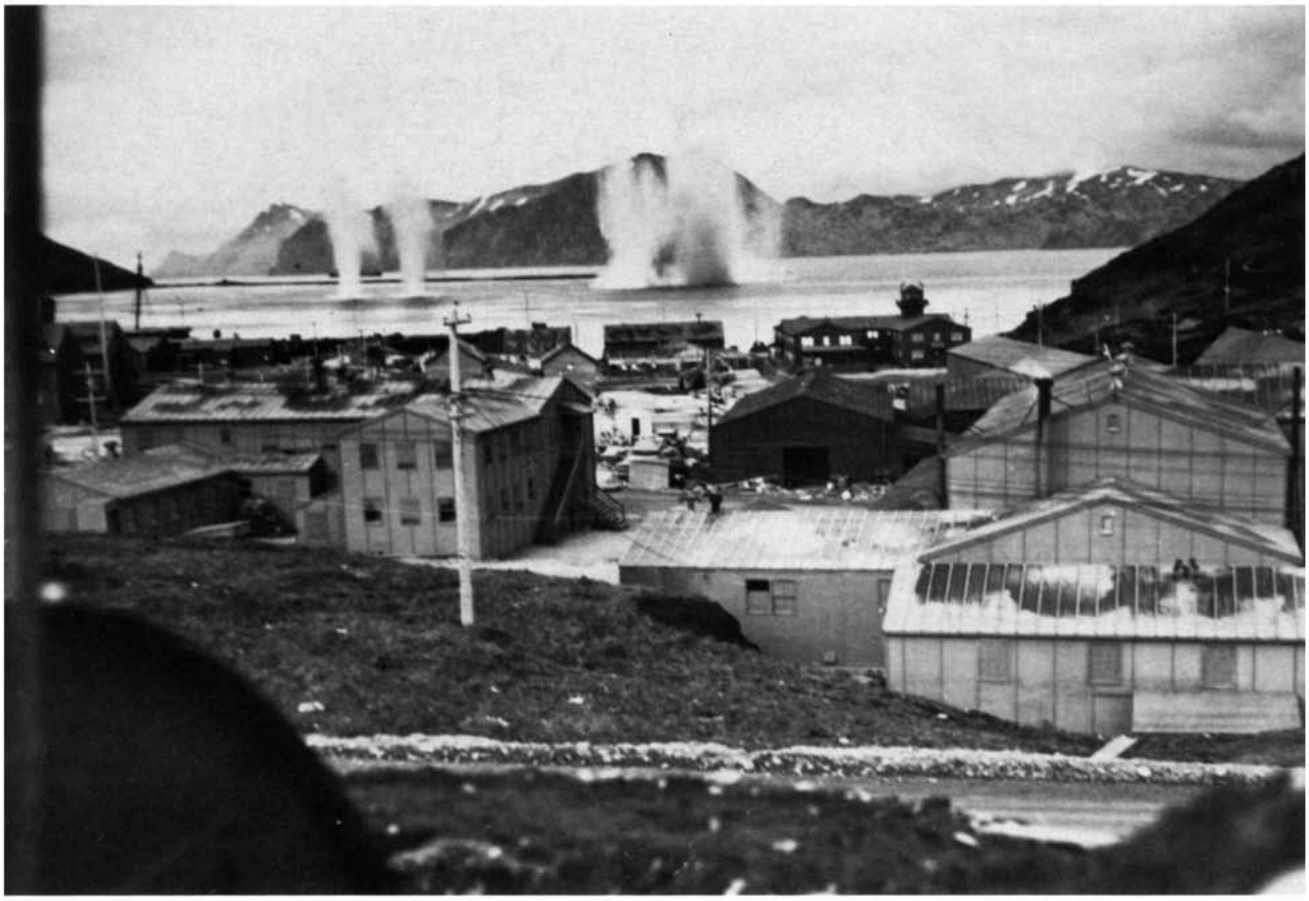
A second wave of three Kates struck at the north-east area of the garrison, hitting the hillside above the officers' barracks. One soldier in a foxhole was killed but otherwise the damage was restricted to broken windows and mud splattered on the barracks (building 644).

Japanese attention then moved to the naval radio station, in an effort to knock out the transmitting towers. One bomb landed in the antenna field, destroying an antenna and blowing out the windows of the brick apartment house. A Quonset hut in the same area to the south-east of the radio station was obliterated by a direct hit. A shelter trench was driven in, killing a Siems Drake worker, George P. Deal. Three more bombs fell in soft earth around the radio station.

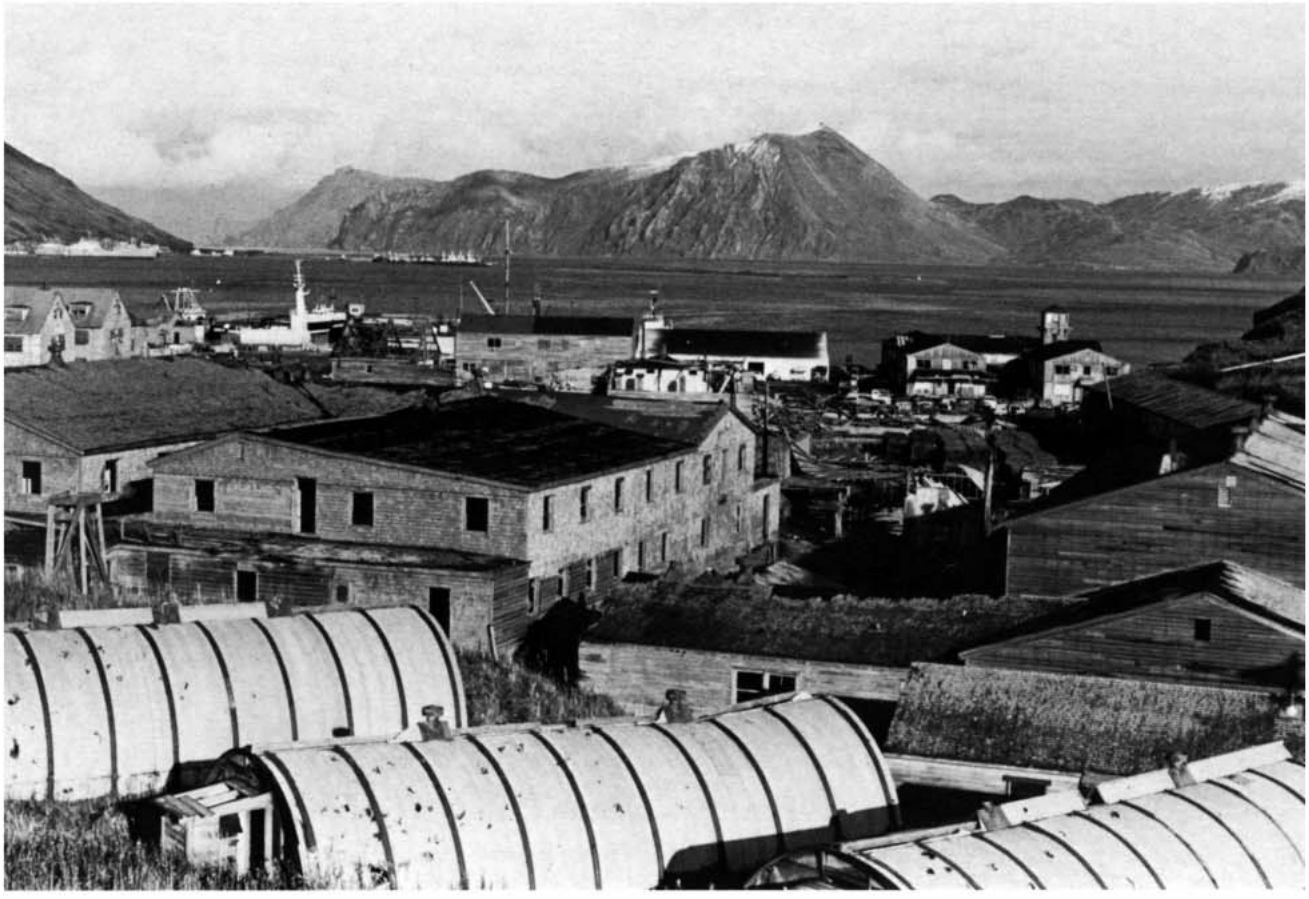
The final bombing run of June 3 was made on the fuel oil and aviation gas tanks on 'Powerhouse Hill', the hill above the bomb-proof power house. The fuel tanks were missed but there were casualties. One bomb exploding on the road to the officers' duplexes sprayed a fire watch shelter with shrapnel, killing a Navy man standing outside and injuring another standing inside, while a third man seated within as prescribed emerged unscathed. A second bomb fell on the hillside above the road, destroying a 1½-ton truck and killing the Army driver. A third bomb landed near a defensive trench, killing Marine Private Andy Corbin. Three more bombs exploded on the hillside, causing only craters in the soft ground.

Japanese bombers struck 'Powerhouse Hill' during the first raid killing an Army driver in this 1½-ton truck and a Navy man standing outside the fire watch station. The bomb crater is visible on the road. (National Archives)

Today there is no trace of the fire watch station or any bomb damage on 'Powerhouse Hill'. The warehouse next to the road was constructed in 1943. (Stuhler)



Above: **The Naval Base at Dutch Harbor under attack on June 4, with bombs intended for gun positions on the spit falling harmlessly into the harbour. The building on the right with the crow's nest was the Naval Administration Building. (National Archives)** *Below:* **The area from which the 1942 photograph was taken was altered in 1943 preventing today a duplicate view. This picture of the Naval Base was taken from a nearby location. (Stuhler)**



The raiders then made their way back south to the *Ryujo*. The raid had gone off without interference from American aircraft — the fighters at Fort Glenn had remained on alert, the base never receiving the radio message that Fort Mears was under attack. The message had been broadcast at 5.50 a.m. and received at Anchorage but not Umnak. The temporary radio system established by the Alaska Communications System (Army) was defeated by weather interference. The Army had lost the use of the more powerful Navy radio station in April when ACS began installing the temporary system that was to be replaced by an ocean cable, to be laid in July by the cableship *Restorer*.

As the carrier aircraft were returning, one pilot spotted the American destroyers in Makushin Bay. He radioed ahead this important discovery and Admiral Kakuta ordered a second attack. This time the objective would be the destroyers, to be attacked by aircraft from the *Junyo* plus two observation planes catapult-launched from the *Takao* and *Maya*.

The twenty-two planes from the *Junyo* and the two observation planes encountered overcast conditions and could not find the destroyers or Makushin Bay. The two observation aircraft returning to their ships flew near Otter Point and Fort Glenn where they were intercepted by P-40s from the Umnak strip. In the uneven match the P-40s shot down one of the observation planes and damaged the second; as the Japanese were taken by such surprise it would seem that they had failed to spot the airstrip. The remainder of the attack group returned to their carrier without incident.

After recovering the aircraft of the unsuccessful Makushin Bay raid the carrier force sailed westwards for Adak. As they did so, the weather became more and more unfavourable and, rather than battle it out with the weather in the west, Kakuta decided a second strike against Dutch Harbor would be a better use of his forces. This time the flight groups were restricted to those pilots with the most experience in flying in adverse weather conditions, which narrowed the attack group down to fifteen Zeros and seventeen Vals from the *Ryujo* and *Junyo* upon the carrier's return on June 4.

The attack aircraft were spotted by Army observation teams at Fisherman's Point, Unalaska, at 5.40 p.m. Five minutes later they were observed by another observation post at Eider Point and at 5.52 p.m. they were seen above Mount Ballyhoo lining up for the attack. At 6.00 p.m. the fighters began strafing the naval station and immediately anti-aircraft guns opened fire as the attacking planes came over Unalaska village to begin their bombing runs on the oil dock. One prematurely released bomb hit the

Marines relaxing in their trench position after the raid on June 3. (National Archives)

The trenches and gun sites near the Marine Barracks have collapsed and overgrown since the war. The actual shape of the hill above the position was altered after the raid by the construction of a large bunker below ground with a frame building on top of it for use as the Joint Command Post (Army and Navy). The fuel tanks were installed here after the war. (Stuhler)

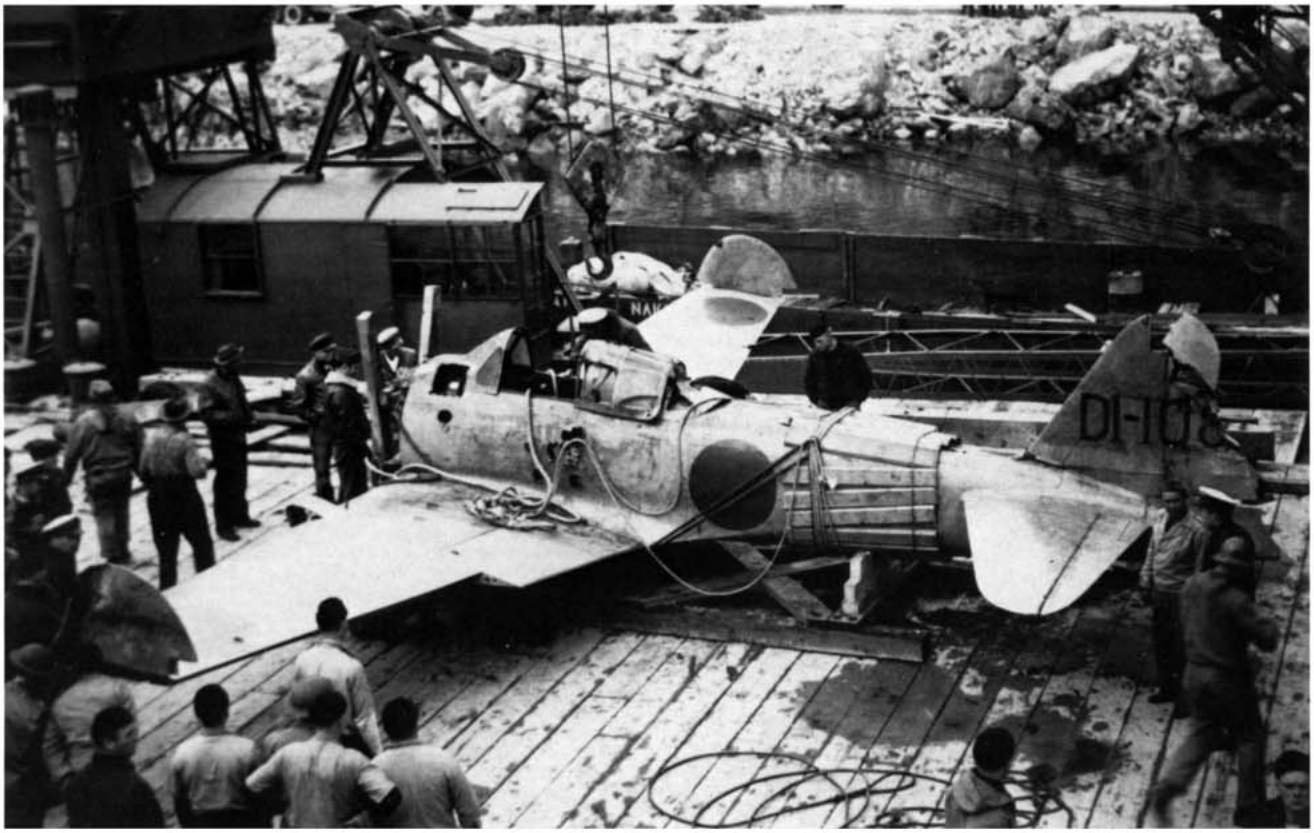
Other positions have completely disappeared — like this one taken over by Edgar Bergen and his two stooges while on a visit to Dutch Harbor to entertain the troops in August 1942. (National Archives/Stuhler)

This 20mm gun mounting still standing in its emplacement above Fort Mears is one of three surviving 20mm mounts at Dutch Harbor today. All the weapons were removed after the war and the large calibre coastal defence guns destroyed with explosives. Two 6-inch guns that were cut into pieces sit in a dump. (Stuhler)

corner of the Unalaska Hospital, destroying the nurses' quarters of the emptied building. The attackers were quickly over the real target, the oil dock and fuel tank farm southwest of Rocky Point. Four steel tanks filled only a few days earlier by the USS *Brazos* were destroyed. Another was punctured but not destroyed. The entire fuel tank farm appeared to be ablaze as huge black funnels of smoke rose above it.

The next target was the Dutch Harbor dock and the barracks ship *Northwestern*. A bomb grazed the corner of the dock, causing little damage, but the one that fell on the port stern of the former Alaska Steamship Company vessel set it afire. Wind carried the fire from the *Northwestern* to a warehouse at the dock, consuming the building and threatening the fuel tanks across the street and the Navy barracks adjacent to them. Firefighting and damage control, here under the direction of Fire Chief Harold J. Davis and Major C. P. Groves of the Marine barracks, averted great losses.

The seaplane facility had then come under attack by a group of bombers — a hit ripping a hole in the roof of the hangar and causing further damage to a PBY caught the day before. Off Ballyhoo spit, three other bombers (their attack timed at 6.21 p.m.) were intent upon sinking the *Fillmore* as she weaved in evasive action — all their bombs falling harmlessly into the harbour. Meanwhile the bombers over the seaplane facility turned their attention to the ammunition magazines and gun emplacements above the



The Zero fighter which was recovered from Akutan Island in July 1942 was photographed while at Ballyhoo Dock waiting to be transferred to a ship to carry it to San Diego on the west coast of the United States for evaluation. It later appeared in a training film *The Japanese Zero* (see *After the Battle* videocassette No. 6). (National Archives)

steel seaplane hangar on the south slope of Mount Ballyhoo. One bomb struck a Navy 20mm gun emplacement about a hundred yards north-east of the hangar at the junction of Ballyhoo Road and the road to the ammunition magazines. The battery officer, Lieutenant Kenneth Greiner, and two crew members were killed. The road to the ammunition magazines was named Greiner Road after the raid in honour of the battery officer. Nine more bombs fell in the ammunition magazine area without causing damage.

Having finished their work at Dutch Harbor the *Junyo* group rallied over Fort Glenn on their return trip to the carrier. Unaware of the airstrip directly below, to their surprise they were promptly set upon by eight P-40s of the 'Aleutian Tigers' — the 11th Fighter Squadron. In the swirling dogfight that ensued the Japanese lost one Zero and three Vals; the Americans two P-40s, one flown by Lieutenant John Cape and the other by Lieutenant Winfield E. McIntyre. The Zero had been shot down by Cape before another Zero jumped him and sent him to his death. Otter Point was later named Cape Air Force Base in his honour. McIntyre walked away from a crash-landing.

Japanese losses for the raid were light — nine aircraft to the American's ten — but there was one loss that was to prove of considerable benefit to the Americans. This was a Zero that came down on Akutan Island. The pilot of the aircraft, Flight Petty Officer Tadayoshi Koga from the *Ryujo*, returning to the carrier saw his oil pressure drop to zero and so elected to make an emergency landing on Akutan to be picked up by a lifeguard submarine. Seeing a flat grassy area, Koga put down his landing gear and descended. Not familiar with the muskeg of the region, what appeared to be a flat grassy field was spongy ground that caught the wheels and flipped the aircraft. Koga's neck was broken in the crash. The aircraft sustained minor damage.

The upturned aircraft was spotted on July 10 during a PBY patrol flight out of Dutch Harbor, and a recovery team was dispatched to Atukan to bring back this important item for intelligence analysis. The team buried Koga near the aircraft, which was removed from the muskeg and taken by barge to the Ballyhoo Dock at Dutch Harbor where it was transferred to a ship bound for the Technical Aircraft Intelligence Center at the Naval Air Station, North Island, San Diego, arriving on August 12. Here, following repairs, it was flight tested and analysed. Positive features such as lightness, air flow and unified construction were noted, along with weaknesses that could be capitalised upon in combat.

The aircraft was also put through its paces in an Army Air Force aircraft recognition movie entitled *The Japanese Zero* in the 'Know Your Enemy' series. Appearing in the movie was Lieutenant Ronald Reagan — 'a pilot who proved that rapid identification of enemy aircraft required practice and study'. The film instructed Lieutenant Reagan that he could identify the Zero by such features as its 'fuselage like a cigar', rounded wing tips and the closeness of the canopy and wings to the nose. After his service in the making of films for the military Ronald Reagan was to return to Hollywood before embarking upon a political career.

After the air strikes, the Japanese naval force moved west for the occupation of the sparsely inhabited islands at the tip of the chain — Kiska on June 6 and Attu the following day. The Unalaska raid had not made much impression. It had not impaired the operational readiness of any of the Navy or Army establishments. At Dutch Harbor repairs were quickly carried out, fuel supplies replenished, and the fire on the *North-western* put out and the boilers refired to provide steam and power for the naval station.

Three of five Japanese prisoners captured after their submarine was sunk off Kiska are escorted to their imprisonment in one of the cottages at the Naval Base. The five arrived at Dutch Harbor on September 7, 1942, remaining there until the 28th, when they were moved to a prison camp in the US. (National Archives)

The news that the Japanese occupied American territory caused a public outcry in the United States, but nothing could diminish the significance of the blow struck by the Pacific Fleet off Midway. Japanese propaganda made the most of the seizure of the bleak and barren northern outposts to trumpet the claim that the flag of the Rising Sun flew over the United States mainland. As for the Imperial Navy's defeat off Midway and the failure to invade the island — the turning point in the Pacific War, which cost Japan the strategic initiative — that was proclaimed a victory in Tokyo, and the loss of all four carriers was concealed.

American retaliation against the occupation of the islands comprised, weather permitting, attempts at bombing and at naval bombardment, together with surface and submarine patrols. The main battle, however, was with the weather, characterised by extreme cold, rain or snow, gales and almost perpetual fog. The success levels of the bombing missions and naval forays were not rated particularly highly.

Slowly and surely, airstrips were laid closer to the islands, and as American military activity grew, so the order was issued by the Imperial High Command for the islands to be held at all costs. The blockade was tightened, and in an encounter off Komandorski Island American and Japanese warships fought an engagement as of old, without the intervention of air power, which ended in one more convoy failing to get through. In May (after a five-day delay because of fog and gales) an American invasion force landed on the northern and southern shores of Attu to trap the defenders, who fought bitterly to the end. In some of the bloodiest fighting of the Pacific War, American casualties included 549 dead and 1,148 wounded out of a total force of about 11,000 men. An invasion force of three times that number was laid on for Kiska in August . . . only for the discovery to be made that the entire Japanese garrison had departed, spirited away three weeks before by warships under cover of fog.

With the recapture of the Aleutian Islands of Attu and Kiska national pride had been restored. The return of the islands to the United States also reduced the need for large forces in Alaska. The size of the Alaska Command was accordingly reduced gradually. The main offensive function then became the harassment of Japanese bases in the Kuriles.

View today: the first cottage in the row burned down during 1943. (Stuhler)

A Panama mount on Hill 400 overlooking Dutch Harbor.

A memorial has been erected at the Unalaska airport terminal to those who died during the war in the Aleutians. Visitors to Dutch Harbor, though, will not find a dramatic, powerful memorial to those who gave their lives defending the bases in 1942. Reminders of the raids at Dutch Harbor on June 3 and 4 are ordinary everyday features of the time, to which no particular attention has since been drawn — and are arguably all the more interesting for that. They require some searching for and assistance with directions. Many of them have eroded away or have been carried away. The trenches and foxholes have generally blended into the terrain but their outlines are apparent from a distance; a good example of this is the hillside on the south-west side of Fort Mears at Margaret Bay, where the trench outlines are highly evident.

One memorial which was carried away has fortunately been preserved and can be seen at the Baranof Museum in Kodiak. This is a bronze plaque that had been installed at Fort Mears in 1944 and was removed by the Navy when the base was closed. Stored by the US Navy for over ten years it was donated to the museum in 1957. It reads: 'Erected in memory of those gallant men whose lives were lost in the raid at Dutch Harbor by the Japanese Air Force, June 3 and 4, 1942. The 85th NCB, August 1944.'

Among the more obvious reminders that remain are a number of the anti-aircraft positions that put up the intense defensive fire. One AA position on Rocky Point hill still has the 20mm gun stand (Mk 4, serial number 41965) and ready magazine warm-up shed. Foxholes, gun positions and 50-calibre and 20mm gun stands on other hills can be found. The positions above Rocky Point are the best preserved. Around the former Army garrison of Fort Mears at Margaret Bay are reinforced concrete pillboxes of what came to be called the 'Iron Ring', the defences around the bases. Only partially completed at the time of the raids were the coastal fortifications at Mount Ballyhoo, Eider Point, Hill 400 and Summer Bay. Emplaced at the time were 155mm guns on 360° 'Panama Mounts,' so called because of their use as part of the Canal defences. The 8-inch gun battery on Mount Ballyhoo while completed after the raids is a remarkable installation and should be seen. The facilities on Hill 400, including Panama Mounts and Fire Control Post, are also well worth a visit.

Little is left of Fort Mears. The hospital was removed in about 1981 to make room for a trailer complex that was never realised and the barracks area was cleaned up in 1985 under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program for former military areas carried out by the Army Corps of Engineers. Eight structures have survived the cleanup operations and a more recent road realignment through the former post that required the demolition of barracks and other buildings. Buildings which still exist include the fire station (building 754), radio station and theatre (building 716), base theatre (building 840) and orderly rooms. There is no evidence of the two barracks (buildings 864 and 866) destroyed by Japanese bombs. The debris of these buildings, seventy-five yards north-west of the entrance to the base theatre, was removed between June 6 and 9 and the site regraded and seeded. The three warehouses that were hit (847, 855, 852), situated on the edge of Margaret Bay to the rear and west of the base theater, were rebuilt after the raids but only the foundations were present during a survey in 1984 and these were removed in 1985.

Collapsed trench entrance overlooking Fort Mears. This was just one of a network of trenches, foxholes, gun positions and shelters on the hills around the Army post and the Navy base.

After the recapture of Attu and Kiska, the bases at Dutch Harbor were downgraded and, with the war moving away, problems of morale assumed more importance. Activities in the clubs were increased. *Left:* **This is an evening in October 1943 in the Chief's Club in the basement of the Naval Radio Station apartment house. (National Archives).** *Right:* **The Chief's Club today with the sea-life mural still evident although the entire building is abandoned. (Stuhler)**

There is more evidence of the two attacks at the naval station than at the Army garrison. The fire watch shelter that was sprayed with shrapnel and where a Navy man was killed outside, which stood on the southern edge of the road between the officers' duplexes of the Defense Housing Area and the power plant, is no more. The officers' duplexes, originally built as married quarters but becoming single accommodation after Pearl Harbor, are today private housing. Between duplexes 36 and 39 can be found the only surviving example of the sixteen fire shelters that were built on the naval station. The hillside above the one where the Navy man died, where a Marine was killed in a trench, was altered after the attack and it is unclear which of them he occupied. This hill was renamed 'Suicide Hill' after the raids because of the deaths here.

Visual evidence of the bombing can be found at the brick apartment house at the naval radio station. It is most evident on the south-east corner of the apartment house which was used as a Chief Petty Officers' quarters during the war.

The oil dock tank farm was rebuilt after the destruction of the fuel tanks and then after the war this area was bulldozed for the construction of a container dock and storage area. A punctured fuel tank has survived, its patch work an interesting recollection of the battle.

The former vessel of the Alaska Steamship Company, the Northwestern, no longer rests on the northern shore of the Dutch Harbor dock where she had been towed and intentionally beached. After being taken out of service in 1937 as too old she was purchased in 1940 for worker accommodation and to supply power (a role performed by the Yale at Kodiak and the City of Victoria at Sitka). After the June 4 raid, when the fire caused by the bomb that fell on the forward port side had been brought under control and the boilers were found to be serviceable, she was able to provide power until land power supplies were complete. No attempt was made to restore any other sections of the ship. In the autumn of 1943, when no longer needed for power, the Northwestern was towed to Captains Bay and loaded with scrap iron. Thence she was to be towed to Seattle to end up like her cargo as scrap.

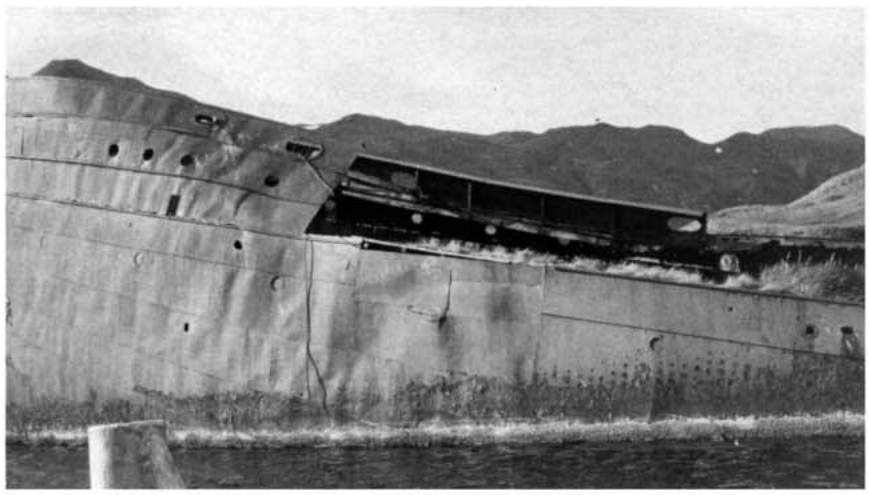
But was she in fact scrapped? For years the fate of the Northwestern was disputed. The United States Navy publication of 1947, Building the Navy's Bases in World War II, records that she was, and this was pointed to by those who dismissed as a local myth the view held by many people at Unalaska with a keen sense of history who contended that a wreck lying partially submerged in Captains Bay was the Northwestern. It seemed reasonable to suppose that the Navy ought to know whether they had scrapped a ship or not.

Vern Robinson, who remembers the war years well, was one of those who regarded the wreck as the Northwestern, apart from the fact that it bore damage in the same area that the ship was hit. Also, naval commander Robert Rose, who served during the war on the staff of the naval district that included Alaska, recalled in an interview in 1985 that orders were issued to tow the ship from Dutch Harbor to Seattle but that it had a low priority and no ocean tugs were available, so she had remained where she was.

The issue was finally resolved recently, when a thorough survey of the wreck was undertaken, with recourse to National Archives photographs of the Northwestern after she was hit. There was nothing mythical about the name still to be seen on the bow.

The site of the warehouse consumed by the flames which carried from the Northwestern was cleaned up after the raids and more

The *Northwestern* burning after the June 4 attack. Today she lies partly submerged, sitting on the bottom in Captains Bay.



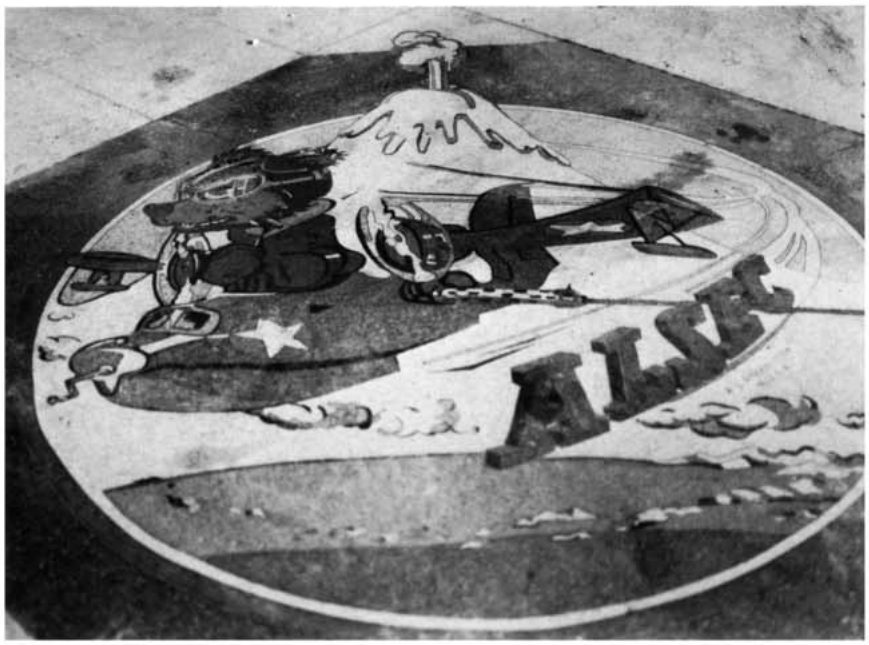
The Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base was proud of its Officers' Club and the bar that was called 'the longest in the Aleutians'. The comfortable lounge of the Club is shown in this August 1943 view. (National Archives)

recently this same area was tidied up during the environmental restoration programme.

At the main Naval Operating Base of Dutch Harbor significant relics of World War II are the Marine barracks, bachelor officers' quarters, Navy barracks and brig and aerology cottages. A tour should include stops at these buildings after permission to enter them has been obtained from the Ounalaska Corporation.

Above the door of the BOQ (bldg 534) are the letters BOQ/NOB identifying the building as the Batchelor Officers Quarters of the Naval Operating Base. Inside the building the most interesting room is to the right as one enters. This was the officers' club, which in 1942 had 'the longest bar in the Aleutians', extending the length of the south wall of the lounge. At the end of the lounge was a fireplace, which has survived, and in the centre of the floor a terrazo symbol for Alaskan Sector Command, or ALSEC. Wes Dobbs, a Marine veteran of Dutch Harbor, watched it being laid in 1943. This was the creation of Chief Carpenters Mate Armand Rizan, who also laid a second terrazo symbol, that of the Naval Air Transport Service (NATS) in the aerology building (No. 417). The NATS terrazo is to be found today in the former Unalaska air terminal building. Before joining the Seabees Rizan owned the A. L. Rizan Terrazo Company of New Orleans, the company being responsible for terrazo floor work in New Orleans and the southern states. At least one Rizan terrazo in New Orleans, completed in 1950, was still to be found in 1985, in the lobby of the Mercy Hospital on N. Jefferson Davis Parkway. Rizan's son reports that his father died in 1963 at the age of 64.

Adjoining the officers' club was a dining area which has been stripped of its former



Centre: **The Officers' Club today: Fortunately the terrazo work of CCM Rizan has survived the vandalism of the rest of the Bachelor Officer Quarters; now it is to be preserved.**

The remains of the Navy brig where Japanese prisoners were held in 1942 after their submarine was sunk near Kiska.

character. It can be identified by the stove, kitchen equipment and steam tray. The officers' quarters were upstairs.

All the graffiti of the period — the names and messages inscribed for posterity, so to speak — discovered at the Unalaska bases during field surveys in 1984 and 1985 was recorded. The most surprising discovery was that there was so little of it. It could be that decay and vandalism have accounted for much. Inner wall studs in the BOQ revealed two names: Norman Sevigny, a Seabee from Providence, Rhode Island and an A. I. Husted. Sevigny, according to his son, returned to Providence after the war and passed away a few years ago. A. I. Husted, with no further information, could not be traced. An effort is under way to locate two Seabees who left their names in barracks buildings at Fort Mears garrison. In the boiler room of barracks 745 a Tufts and Send wrote on the wall that they 'cared for the hot water heaters at Fort Mears'. Tufts recorded that he came from Kentucky; Donald E. Send came from Michigan. Send added the following advice: 'stay sweet and say hello to your folks'. In the boiler room of barracks 738 was the name John Dutch Scannel of Springfield, Massachusetts and the date October 12, 1942. Pat D'Addez left his name in the boiler room of barracks 740 along with Tufts and Send, who probably entered all the boiler rooms to maintain the equipment. Tufts and Send identified their unit as Company A, 26th NCB (Naval Construction Battalion). D'Addez, of Duluth, Minnesota was from the 85th NCB. Only a few more names were found in over 400 buildings checked.

Near the BOQ are three of four 1920s cottages that housed the coast and geodetic survey teams and then in the 1930s personnel from the aerology unit. During World War II the cottages became Yeoman and BOQ housing. Three Japanese prisoners were held and interrogated in cottage 529, which was the second cottage from the BOQ in 1942 but today is the first cottage in the row. The first in the row burned down in 1943.

Five prisoners were captured off a submarine sunk near Kiska on August 31, 1942 and brought to Dutch Harbor. Two others were held in the station brig at the Navy barracks. The five prisoners arrived at Dutch Harbor on September 7 and were held until September 28, when they departed for a prison camp in the 'lower United States'.

At the naval air station the evidence of the Japanese raids has disappeared. The steel seaplane hangar was removed after the attacks and replaced by a double hangar at the edge of the runway which is present today. The 20mm gun position on the road to the ammunition magazines where Lieutenant Greiner was killed could not be found nor are bomb craters evident on the south slope of Mount Ballyhoo.

Unalaska village experienced no civilian casualties. The only physical damage was the bombing of the Unalaska Hospital and destruction of the nurses' quarters. This building was repaired but razed after the war. After the raids, Navy dead were buried at the Unalaska Cemetery and Army dead at a plot of land on the flat ground at the south-west edge of the cemetery. Later the Navy burials were moved to the Army cemetery, which became the American Military Cemetery. Part of it is today a housing subdivision, as the remains of 88 Navy and 68 Army dead were transferred in 1948 to private cemeteries in their respective home states or to the National Cemeteries at Sitka or Fort Richardson when all temporary military cemeteries in Alaska were closed.

The Naval Air Transport Service terminal building at the naval air station at Dutch Harbor pictured *centre* **as it was when in its prime.** *Right:* **It still remains but as a forlorn relic used now only as a storage depository.**

The forgotten battlefield of the Aleutians. The detritus of the war on Kiska — one of the islands occupied by the Japanese — one of the largest relics being this two-man submarine near the harbour. This picture was taken for the US Engineers' report published in 1976 as a result of the widespread survey requested by Congress for a cleanup of war debris in Alaska.

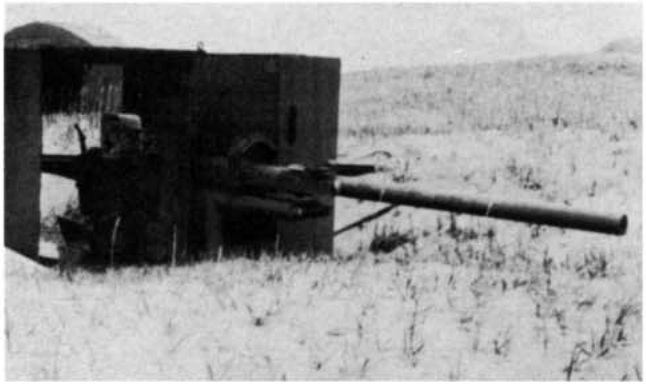
THE ALEUTIANS TODAY

Any description of the artifacts remaining in the Aleutian Islands and the Alaska Peninsula today must take account of the motion enacted by the US Senate and House of Representatives in 1974. This called for a study to be made by the Army 'for the removal and disposal of debris and obsolete buildings remaining as a result of military construction in World War II in the vicinities of Port Heiden, Cold Bay, Unalaska, and Umnak Island, in the Aleutian Islands, Alaska'. The following year the Sub-Committee on Military Construction voiced its concern over the failure of the Army to proceed with the removal of such material and directed the Department of Defense to immediately undertake an evaluation of the problem and report back to Congress methods and costs of removal.

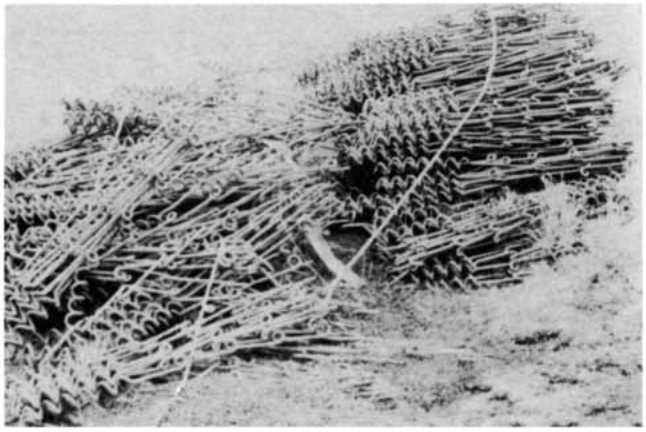
The US Army Engineers in Alaska completed their report, several hundred pages long, in October 1976. In its summary the Engineers explained that 'construction of military facilities by American engineers continued well beyond 1943 when the last Japanese forces in the Aleutians evacuated Kiska. After World War II most of the Army garrisons were abandoned except for the major airfields which were kept active to counter any Soviet threat. By 1950 the Cold War had subsided to where only the military installations at Cold Bay, Adak and Shemya were retained. Nothing was done to the remaining installations once they were abandoned. Today vast quantities of military debris remain on the Alaska Peninsula and in the Aleutian Islands as a result of this abandonment. Only minimal efforts have been conducted by the military to remove the debris. Much of it remains today in populated areas that presents both an environmental eyesore and a safety hazard to the residents. Over 30 years has elapsed since most of the construction took place, yet only a small portion of the debris has been naturally decomposed. Most will still be present in another 30 years, for only cleanup will remove it.'

Presenting a detailed description of the war remains on some 28 islands or specific locations, the Engineers took note that 'countless stories exist today concerning the wealth of treasures that still remain in the Aleutian Islands as a result of the military campaign there during World War II. Japanese and American souvenirs are said to abound on several islands. Everything from Grumman F4 fighter aircraft to Sherman tanks are thought to still be just sitting there waiting to be taken by a lucky party. In fact, there is so much conjecture as to what really is there, that it is virtually impossible to separate truth from myth without actually going to each site. In order to gather as many facts as possible concerning historical features, comprehensive site investigations were made of all major World War II military installations in the Aleutians and Alaska Peninsula. To supplement these visits detailed interviews were conducted with individuals whose professions bring them into daily — even though seasonal — contact with

Left: **A captured British Model 3 (1914) 6-inch naval gun used by the Japanese to defend the harbour.** *Right:* **Japanese Model 93 heavy machine gun in 13.2mm on an anti-aircraft mount in an emplacement on Kiska Island.**

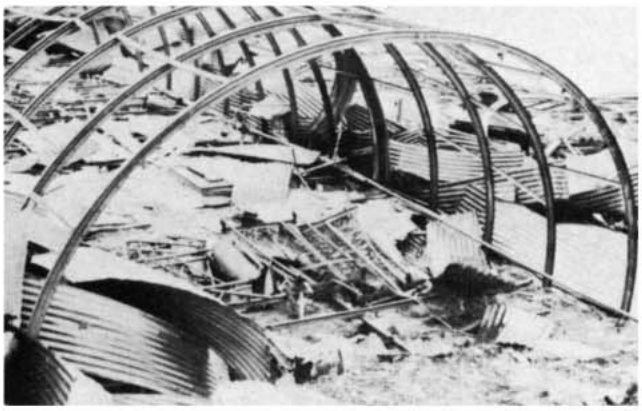


Left: **A stockpile of American 20mm anti-aircraft shells on Tanaga Island, and** *above* **a 3-inch coastal gun in position to defend South Beach on Shemya Island.**

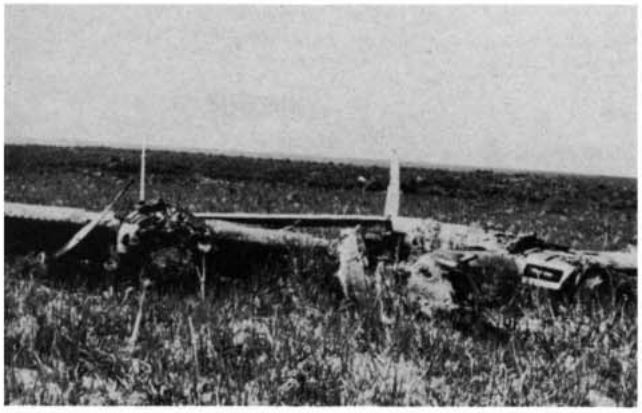


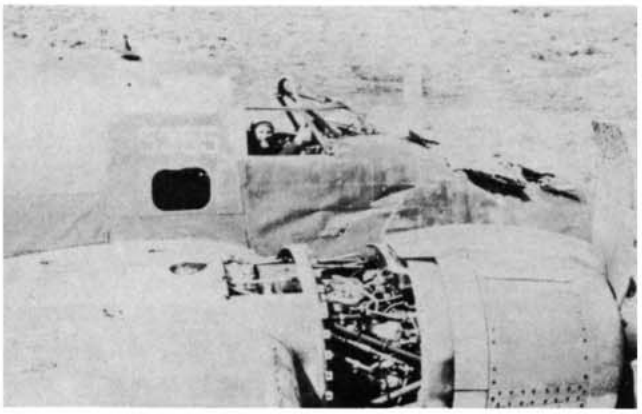
Massive stockpiles of barbed wire and screw picket posts behind Constantine Harbor on Amchitka Island.

Left: **Huge dump of 55-gallon POL drums on Shemya Island.** *Right:* **Floats for American anti-submarine nets on Great Sitkin.**



More common than anything else: the ubiquitous Quonset, these examples being pictured at Finger Bay on Adak Island.





The remains of more then 20 aircraft of various vintages were plotted and some photographed for the report. *Left:* **This is the P–38 on Buldir Island and the Navy PV–1 Ventura on Agattu Island.**

these sites. Time on the ground by Alaska District personnel averaged nearly ten days per site and covered hundreds of square miles. Military search and rescue sections were checked to verify the locations of all known downed aircraft from Cold Bay westward. Reeve Aleutian Airways, which has been constantly flying the Peninsula and Chain ever since the war, also furnished their records on known downed aircraft.'

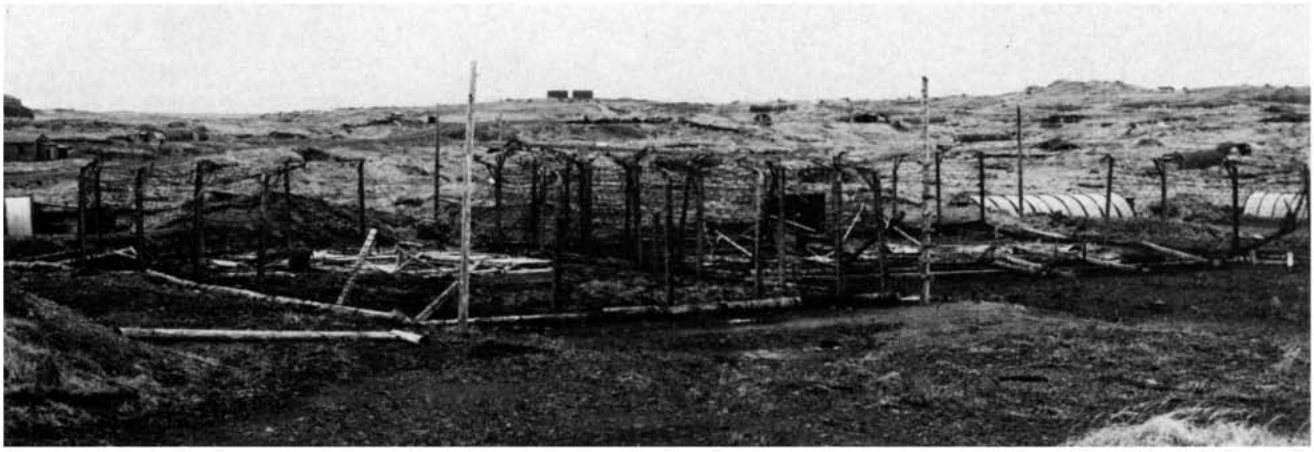
The report stated that 'there are several items remaining in the Aleutian Islands that do have historical significance and should be preserved or salvaged for museums. However, the purported vast quantities thought by many are simply not there! Concrete gun emplacements and coastal batteries are in good condition and should not be removed during any cleanup. These help to identify the various American and Japanese positions, otherwise it would be very difficult to locate them since the lush vegetation has practically covered everything else. Numerous 360° Panama-type coastal gun mounts remain on Dutch Harbor, Amchitka and Attu.

'Attu and Kiska have the greatest historical background as both were under Japanese as well as American occupation. The Attu battlefield is spread out over nearly fifteen square miles and is difficult to envision without good maps and a knowledge of the battle itself. A lone marker placed by the U.S. Navy in 1950 commemorated the spot on Engineer Hill where Col. Yamasaki led the final suicidal charge of the Japanese garrison against the American line. A similar marker at Chichagof Harbor notes the location of the Aleut village of Attu that was overrun by Japanese forces in 1942 and its villagers interned in a slave labor camp in Japan (nothing is presently remaining of the old village). Another stone marker designates the burial site of the village's white schoolteacher/doctor who was shot and killed by the Japanese. All American and Japanese bodies buried in the Little Falls Cemetery at Massacre Bay have been removed and little remains of the cemetery itself. The American chapel on Hogback Ridge is still structurally sound and should be restored, if possible. Its location overlooking Massacre Bay would make an excellent battlefield headquarters if the site were granted park status. Two Japanese Model 88 (1928), 75mm anti-aircraft guns still guard the bombed out Japanese airfield at the East Arm of Holtz Bay. The hydraulic arms have been removed by American forces to prevent them from being fired. Two good 1935 vintage tractor-pulled scrapers are resting near the main runway and at the dump near Murder Point. These are excellent examples of the early engineer equipment used by troops to build runways and roads in the Aleutians. An interesting steel-wheeled roller sits deep in the grasses of Holtz Bay. Panama-type coastal gun mounts still remain at Chichagof Harbor and Murder Point. But perhaps the most interesting and unique item on Attu is the phoney water tower on Murder Point that was actually a hidden American radar tower. Unfortunately, unless restoration is made soon, this structure will not stand much longer. Great historical significance abounds all over the Attu battlefield but practically nothing remains of the actual battle except the hundreds of bomb and artillery craters. Japanese remains are virtually non-existent.

LIST OF DOWNED AIRCRAFT AS AT 1976

Date	Aircraft	Position of Wreck
WWII	B-24	Cape Kigun, Atka
WWII	B-24	Ilak Island, wreckage intact
28 Oct 46	P-38	Tanaga Bay, poor condition
28 Oct 46	OA-10	Tanaga Bay
31 Aug 51	PB 4Y-2	NW tip of Little Tanaga, 500-foot level
WWII	B-24	Semisopochnoi, east side of Derret Ridge
WWII	B-24	Bechevin Bay, Atka, very good condition
WWII	A-20	Kiska, east end of landing strip
WWII	B-24	Great Sitkin, fuselage intact, wings folded back
WWII	PBY	NE side of Kiska volcano
WWII	PBY	Cliff on Kasatochi Island
WWII	OA-10	Atka, north side of Korovin Bay
WWII	P-38	NW point of Buldir Island, poor condition
5 Sep 46	PV-1	Agattu Island, pretty good condition
WWII	P-38	Alaid Island, very poor condition
5 Sep 46	C-47	Attu
WWII	P-38	Attu, Temnac Bay, poor condition
WWII	P-40	SW end of Umnak Island, Cape Starr
WWII	PBY	Unalaska Island, debris scattered from 300-900 ft. levels
WWII	P-40	Unalaska, badly scattered
WWII	OA-10	Unalaska, badly scattered
WWII	Zero	Akutan, very poor condition
11 Dec 73	C-118	Great Sitkin, ten persons on board — no survivors

The old infirmary building on Amchitka as it appeared in 1985. To date, the Alaska District has completed the cleanup of Dutch Harbor, Cold Bay, Amchitka, Atka, and has scheduled Port Heiden for 1989. Colt Denfield reports from Anchorage that their are plans for only a limited cleanup at Attu (a dump, ordnance and oil drums), and the same at Chernofski. Umnak will also be limited to fuel drums and any hazardous wastes. Their are no moves to clear up the very remote or small islands.



'Kiska was the site of the largest Japanese garrison in the Aleutians (8,000 troops at one time). Many permanent structures still remain today to mark their occupation. Numerous coastal and anti-aircraft batteries are well intact. An added plus is that the original guns are still in their positions. These include 13.2mm, 20mm, 25mm, 75mm, and 90mm anti-aircraft guns as well as perhaps the most historical of all Aleutian remains — 12 and 14cm coastal guns dated 1900 and believed to be from the British fortress at Singapore which the Japanese overran early in the war. Several of these guns were found by American forces in the South Pacific but none were known to have been used in the Aleutian campaign. These guns are considered very historical and are certainly worthy of maximum restoration efforts. Most of the batteries are situated on the high ridges above Kiska Harbor where they once commanded the harbor entrance. Although destroyed by two internal explosive charges, a Japanese two-man miniature submarine still rests in the grasses near Kiska Harbor. Kiska is unique to Attu in that it does still contain some items that portray the Japanese camp life. A home-made barber chair still remains in a bath house. Also a Japanese officer's quarters remains complete with pot-belly stove and Japanese inscriptions. A portion of a Japanese shrine is evident near South Head. Little remains of the American camp except the matting runway (not useable) and several sturdy rosewood water barrels. However, like Attu, the entire site has tremendous historical significance and should definitely be considered for military park or monument status.

'Shemya contains only a few items of historical importance. Several underground concrete fire control installations and earthen mortar batteries guard the island approaches. These do mark the old American fortifications and defense lines and should remain. Three American 3-inch coastal guns are still located on the southern beach and guarding the runway. Two have had the barrels spiked; all are well rusted. Quite interesting on Shemya are the several Renault tank turrets located adjacent to the old runways and taxiways. Apparently they were installed as a precaution against possible Japanese glider and paratroop attacks. The turrets were placed over a concrete manhole with machine guns used as armament. One well preserved Athey tracked lorry still stands beside Hangar No. 1 and is worthy of museum attention.

Nevertheless due regard has been made for the retention, if not the active preservation, of any buildings or special features of historic interest — like the old stockade on Amchitka (*above*) and one of the machine gun turrets still to be seen alongside the runway.

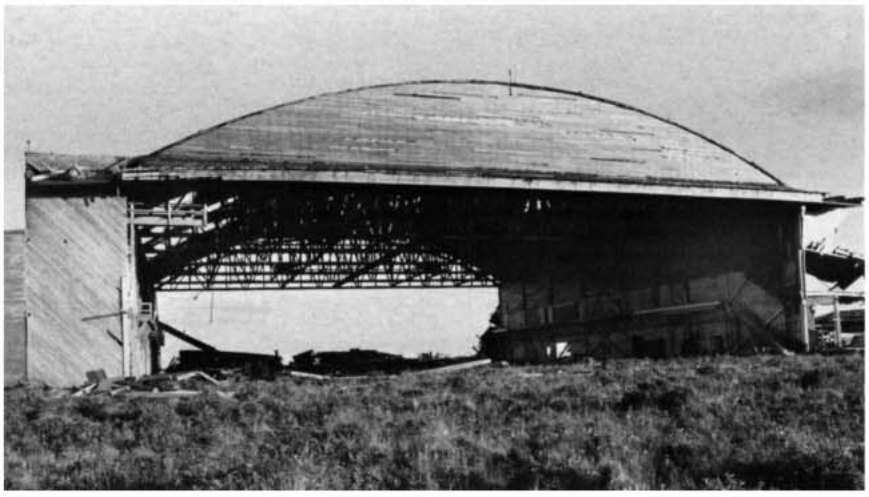
Also earmarked for saving on the island is the Officers Club, seen (*left*) in 1979 and the interior six years later.

A birchwood hangar under construction at Fort Glenn at the eastern end of Umnak Island — a rather sorry sight today but to be left in situ.

'The only items of historical significance on Amchitka are the Panama-type coastal gun emplacements north of Constantine Harbor. These were the only permanent fortifications placed on this island during its war buildup.

'Adak has very few items worthy of special historical significance. Several octahedronal coastal positions still remain in the Andrews Lake and Zeto Point areas. These small reinforced concrete positions appear to have been used for 75mm howitzers and 81mm mortar batteries. Very little remains of the original military area near the runway and Sweeper Cove as the present Naval Station now occupies that land. Most all of the old military structures built on the hill above the runway in the old Headquarters area have been either burned or are collapsed. Only the names of the roads remain for those that are interested. Located near the present day site of the Naval Communication Station to the south of Mt. Adagdak is the long abandoned Albert Mitchell airfield. This runway and taxiway complex was made entirely of steel matting placed on sand. The old wooden hangar still stands and serves as a stockpile site for construction materials. Its condition is less than good and is thus not recommended for restoration.

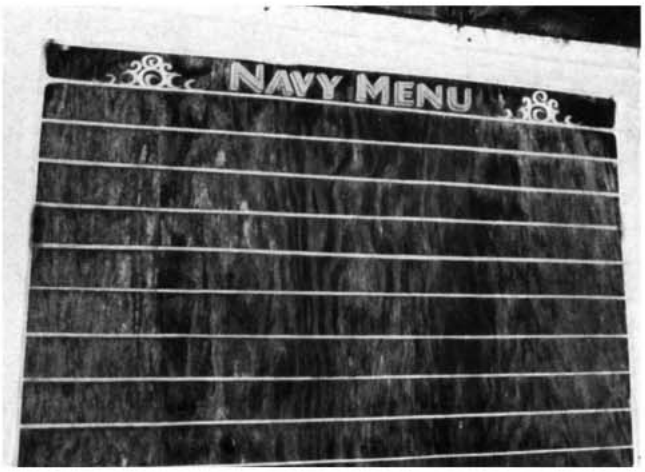
'Tanaga, located west of Adak, does contain many vintage engineer construction vehicles. Several pre-1940 D4 dozers, tractor-pulled scrapers, dump trucks and utility vehicles remain. Apparently whenever it was decided to abandon the site, all motorized vehicles were run up on the matting runway, drained of their oil, and left running until they froze up. They were



spaced in an alternating manner over the entire length of the runway to prevent landing by aircraft. It was quite an effective means for nobody has landed there — other than by helicopter — ever since the troops left. Another item of significance on Tanaga is an early 1930 steam shovel which still remains at the old quarry site. All these construction items were very early war issue and seldom found in the Pacific theater. This gives them an added historical flavor. Another interesting note concerning Tanaga is the haste in evacuating the island by the American troops. Table settings complete with silverware and condiments were found several years ago by US Navy personnel. All were still in their original positions at the table. A pool table complete with balls and cues still remained in play. Cans of food remained on the shelves but have since been consumed by animals. When the boat came in, the troops left and never looked back.

'Ft. Glenn on the east tip of Umnak Island also has several interesting features from the

In the Navy mess hall, a menu board awaits its next meal.



Marston mat (PSP) runway at Atka.

The remains of two 6-inch guns cut up and dumped at Chernofski Harbor.

war days. Two well-preserved color paintings by Private Carl Ennis depict the homesick attitude of many of the troops stationed there. Both of these were painted in 1943 and certainly need to be salvaged and turned over to a museum. In the same building an improvised barber chair still rests awaiting customers. This too is considered worthy of historical attention. Several Panama-type coastal gun emplacements remain overlooking Umnak Pass. The purported residence of General Simon Buckner, commander of the Army forces in Alaska during the Aleutian campaign, still remains in restorable condition near the runway.

'Aside from the many archaeological finds at Dutch Harbor and in particular Hog Island, most items of historical significance recommended for retention are the massive reinforced concrete bomb-proofs and gun emplacements. The bomb-proof powerhouse is probably the most permanent structure in all the Aleutians and Peninsula. It certainly is capable of withstanding a direct hit from a 500lb bomb. Fire control positions and radar sites exist on Hill 400 and numerous coastal gun emplacements, complete with underground bunkers and battery headquarters, can be found on Ballyhoo Mountain. These structures are all reinforced concrete and in excellent condition. Their positions mark the key harbor approaches which they one day defended. It was here on June 3, 1942, that the Japanese struck the first blow in the Aleutian campaign. One can still overlook Dutch Harbor today and see essentially the same installation that the Japanese saw when they first bombed it.

'Nearby Akutan contains the remains of a badly scattered Japanese Zero fighter. It was also on this island on June 4, 1942 that Flight Petty Officer Tadayoshi Koga crash-landed his Zero when an American bullet severed the plane's oil pressure line.

'Nothing but stories remain at Cold Bay. A Sherman tank was purported to have been tested there for establishing a tank's effectiveness for operating on tundra. Once off the gravel roads the tank immediately sank out of sight in a bog and report has it that it is still settling.'

As far as the actual cleanup of the military debris, the Engineers summarised the problem as having two alternatives: total cleanup or only partial.

'In view of the extreme costs associated with any cleanup activity in such remote areas as the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands', the Engineers recommended that 'lesser alternatives to total cleanup should be considered'. During the course of the study it became apparent that total cleanup and restoration to conditions which existed prior to World War II was not only impractical and unrealistic, but also would result in environmental degradation equal or greater than that which resulted from the initial installation of facilities. The cost would also be in excess of $117 million.

Armed with this knowledge, the Engineers proposed that only a partial cleanup should be undertaken. This would require the removal of over 6,100 Quonset and Pacific huts, 2,100 wood frame buildings of various size, 20,000 drums of petroleum, oils and lubricants, and countless bits and pieces of military material. Also included would be most concrete structures, vehicles, accessible aircraft, supply depots, fuel and water supply systems, ordnance, and all other debris within the existing road networks of each chosen site. Such an operation was costed at $58 million.

Three methods of removal were considered for disposing of debris: salvage, dumping at sea or burial on land. Three salvage contracts had already been awarded, the first in 1956 when the General Metals Corporation of Tacoma, Washington, worked for two years recovering non-ferrous metals, trucks, tractors etc. Then Stano Steel of Anchorage, Alaska, removed material on Amchitka but the third contract to a Spanish company for salvage on Adak was defaulted because of the very high costs of operating in the Aleutian Islands. Because of this it was recommended that any future contract be placed with a contractor highly experienced in solving complex logistics problems.

Naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams had already spent several years on Attu attempting to dispose of the vast stores of munitions there, while what remained on Kiska was largely stockpiled in caves. At Cold Bay old ordnance had been buried in a well-marked site.

As previous salvage attempts had been largely unsuccessful, since the value of the

With transportation costs eliminating the physical removal of unsalvageable products, and dumping at sea ruled out, the actual methods to be employed to clear up had to avoid a situation in which an even more unsightly mess was liable to be left behind. Simply burning structures, like this Quonset on Adak (*left*), was not a solution; all scrap had to be collected together in areas, such as this dump (*right*), which could then be buried and the land graded and seeded.

material was less than the cost of removal, the first option was rejected. As Federal law prohibited the dumping of anything that might float or any petroleum products or contaminated items at sea, this ruled out the second possible method of disposal leaving land burial as the only feasible solution.

The report explained that this was the least expensive alternative as 'legitimate disposal sites already exist at most sites in the form of village dumps, borrow pits, abandoned quarries, and natural cuts.

'Methods of removal primarily involve burning wooden buildings, demolishing the smaller concrete and reinforced concrete structures and generally picking up all loose debris for collection and subsequent disposal. All fuels and other petroleum products should be burned in controlled areas to avoid any possible pollution. At the conclusion of disposal operations burial of all debris would be undertaken and all disturbed areas graded to blend with the natural contours of the site and then artificially seeded to enhance aesthetics and prevent erosion.

'During any cleanup operation a versatile inspection team is needed to ensure that removal techniques are both efficient and environmentally acceptable. This team should include qualified construction inspectors, fish and wildlife experts and archeologists. Most of all the sites in the Aleutian Islands are known to contain some vestiges of past civilizations that demand cultural preservation. Also a qualified historian is needed on this team to identify sites eligible for inclusion into the National Register of Historic Places. Attu and Kiska are both considered historic features of our national heritage. Attu should be given prime consideration as a National Battlefield despite its remoteness.'

The overall area to be cleaned up totalled 3,500,000 acres stretching over 1,200 miles with very little in the way of support facilities west of Anchorage. Because of the magnitude of even the partial cleanup at $58 million, it was recommended that the work be done in stages rather than all at once.

Thus it was that forty years after the Japanese occupied Attu Island on June 7, 1942, the US National Park Service carried out a wide-ranging study of World War II battlefields in the Pacific. As a result of Erwin Thompson's research in 1982, Attu was subsequently declared a National Historic Monument. This is his own account of his visit.

Because of the hostile climate and strength of the prevailing winds, where possible huts had been semi-sunk into the ground and protected by earth revetments. This is the site of a Pacific hut destroyed by fire on Amchitka, 1985.

Fort Mears at Dutch Harbor after the cleanup operation — compare with the photographs on page 1. The metal pipe vented a personnel shelter which could be entered from a trench in front of it or the concrete shaft visible in the photograph.

ATTU FORTY YEARS AFTER

BY ERWIN N. THOMPSON

The recapture of Attu by the US Seventh Infantry Division in May 1943 was important to the morale of the American people who had little to cheer about at the time. The battle illustrated the worthiness of the American soldier against his enemy and it demonstrated the loyalty of the Japanese soldier to his cause when only 29 out of 2,500 survived. Mistakes made and lessons learned in amphibious landings, tactics, and logistical planning made significant contributions to future Pacific operations. The official US historians wrote that 'In terms of numbers engaged, Attu ranks as one of the most costly assaults in the Pacific. In terms of Japanese destroyed, the cost of taking Attu was second only to Iwo Jima: for every hundred of the enemy on the island, about seventy-one Americans were killed or wounded.'

In the fall of 1982 I arranged with the US Coast Guard to fly on its weekly patrol aircraft from Kodiak Island to Attu via the Navy Base on Adak and the Air Force Base on Shemya. After a couple of weather and mechanical delays, our big C-130 lifted off from the Kodiak Coast Guard base. The flight took most of the day. Finally, Attu came into view. We circled over Massacre Bay, flying past the wreckage of a Coast Guard plane that had crashed and burned three months earlier.

The aircraft made a smooth landing on a former naval runway which was built after the battle. While the runway is maintained, there are no ground radar or other facilities. The men have posted 'Attu International Airport' on a small shed next to the runway. With mounting excitement, I carried my backpack to the concrete Coast Guard station, also inherited from the Navy.

Knowing that Attu's weather was terrible at best, I was overwhelmed by the calm, crystal-clear air that welcomed our arrival. After orientation and chow, I went for my first hike as the sun was setting. The warm, clear air brushed past me as I strolled along the shore of Massacre Bay where two battalions of the 17th Infantry Regiment had stormed ashore in a fog on May 11, 1943. (The name was given to the bay during the Russian period when Russians killed a number of Aleuts.) Petroleum tanks, barrels, Quonset ruins, and a half-sunk landing craft evoked 1943.

That evening, LTJG Robert J. Wilson, the Coast Guard commander, introduced me to a couple of local regulations. I was not to enter areas where the Americans had set up ammunition dumps. Although these areas have been cleaned up, there was the possibility of live rounds still hidden in the tall grasses. The other rule was a great disappointment: I could not camp overnight alone. Since there was no possibility of finding a companion, this meant I would not be able to visit the more remote parts of the battlefield.

I hit the trail at daybreak (9.00 a.m.) the next morning, having signed out on the quarterdeck that I was heading for the Hogback which divided Massacre Valley into east and west. With parka, camera, backpack and lunch, I climbed the only road on the island that is maintained. Black Mountain and Robinson Ridge ahead threatened my advance. From these gaunt ridges the

In terms of casualties, Attu was second only to Iwo Jima as the costliest of the Pacific landings. Only 29 of the Japanese defenders were taken alive and 549 Americans were killed with a further 1,148 wounded. The US cemetery lay here at Little Falls. Both Attu and Kiska have recently been declared National Historic Landmarks, the legal difference to National Monument status being that the latter are those sites in the ownership of the US federal government. Erwin Thompson visited the Attu battlefield in 1982 to carry out a survey for the National Park Service to show existing conditions.

Although built after the battle, the Army chapel on the Hogback is, or rather was, one of the most substantial buildings still standing from the WWII era. Erwin Thompson photographed it in 1982 but a heavy snowfall collapsed it in 1987. Picture of the ruin by Jim Stuhler, Army Corps of Engineers.

Japanese had held off the Southern Landing Force for a week. About three-fourths of the way up the ridge, the ruins of the post-battle army headquarters came into view. The most noteworthy evidence is the army chapel where GIs planted evergreens around its door. The trees continue to thrive on otherwise treeless Attu. The chapel is on its last legs but, because it is the only structure around, it appears substantial.

I continued on to the top of the Hogback, near to where it blends into Clevesy Pass. In contrast to the evening before, the wind began to pick up rather strongly. It began to whistle, rocking me on my feet. Still uncertain about Attuan weather, I regretfully retraced my steps back to the chapel. The wind blew through the building almost as fiercely as outside, but I sat down and ate lunch with cold fingers. By now, I was most concerned at the increasing violence of the wind. Reluctantly, I concluded I should return to the station.

Before starting down the Hogback, I hiked the short distance to the edge of the cliff looking over East Massacre Valley. Suddenly, a gust of wind grabbed at me and my backpack, lifted me clear off the ground, and deposited my butt on a flat rock about eight feet away. Moss flew everywhere. Thoroughly alarmed, I headed for the station midst rain, sleet, and the ever-howling wind. The wind was whipping water from the bay; I don't expect ever again to hear water scream. Struggling against the wind, I took a long time in reaching the building. Signing in, I went to my room to change clothes. The loudspeaker came on asking if I was in the building and to report to radio. I hurried there and learned that the Coast Guard had dispatched a vehicle to the Hogback to bring me back. It had left from the back of the building as I had entered the front. It could not find me and was radioing back. This was an embarrassing start to exploring Attu. In less than twenty-four hours I had experienced a williwaw with winds of ninety miles per hour and a windchill of 12 degrees F.

The following morning dawned clear with scattered clouds. During the day a few rain showers watered the earth and the wind remained moderate. I decided to hike the nine miles to Alexai Field toward the end of Gilbert Ridge. Since the walk was around Massacre Bay at water level, it promised not to be difficult. I made my way eastward toward gaunt Gilbert Ridge, gaining an excellent view up East Massacre Valley where the US Army established Camp Earle after the battle. The camp was named for Colonel Edward P. Earle, commanding the 17th Infantry Regiment, who was killed on the second day in the battle for Attu. When the Army abandoned Attu it pretty well cleaned up after itself. Only one Quonset remains, at the head of the valley. But the scars in the tundra mark the locations of the many structures that once stood there. Army troops remained on Attu until September 1947.

Following along the base of steep Gilbert Ridge with its many waterfalls I reached Alexai Point about noon. On July 10, 1943, the Eleventh Air Force made its first attack on Japan's home islands when eight B-25 bombers flew from Alexai Field to strike Paramushiro in the Kuriles — the first air attack on Japan by land-based bombers. That October the Japanese returned the favour when their bombers struck the field. Only a lone outhouse remains standing. The outline of the 5,500-foot main runway is still visible. The pierced steel runway matting is in an advanced state of rust and much of it was overgrown with tundra. Hardstands and a few earthen revetments also remained. It was difficult to realise that Army bombers took off from this runway only two months after US forces invaded Attu.

At the east end of the runway, behind an embankment, I stumbled on a number of earthen bays. These contained masses of expended ·30 and ·50 rounds and clips for ·30 rounds. Many of the cases were ruptured. I could not tell if these had accidentally burned or if they were set on fire when the airfield was abandoned. By this time, the sun was out and in the distance I saw both Agattu Island, which the Japanese had temporarily occupied, and Alaid Island, one of the Semichis. In contrast to the day before, this day was a success and I returned to the station in time for evening chow.

The third day was devoted to exploring the US Navy installations at 'Navy Town', including Casco Cove, named for the seaplane tender USS *Casco* which was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine at Atka but which recovered, and Murder Point. In 1944 the Navy paved the runways and the Army moved its bombers from Alexai Point to this field and renewed the bombing missions against the Kuriles. Navy planes made lonely patrols over the North Pacific. The runways have been repaved recently and are in excellent condition. I walked along them and the seemingly endless taxiways and the countless revetments on their sides. Near the base of Weston Mountains is a string of steel, Quonset-type ammunition magazines for the airfield; but none of the 13 Army and Navy hangars exists today.

Out on Casco Point I looked in vain for evidence of the two US Army 90mm anti-motor torpedo boat batteries. I did find a tunnel framed with timber and several

Typical of the terrain over which the battle was fought in 1943 is illustrated in this shot taken near the top of Point Able looking west-north-west up Jarmin Pass in the centre of the photo. Black Mountain is on the left of the pass and Robinson Ridge is to the right.

The final charge. Two memorials are to be found on Engineer Hill today recording the death of the Japanese commander: one erected by his own side, the other by his adversaries.

wrecked Quonsets. The tundra grasses hide a great many holes in the ground and walking is dangerous. From there I traversed the old road around Casco Cove, passing two large concrete buildings long since abandoned by the Navy, to Murder Point. At the point is a tall structure that appears to be a water tower but actually it contained a radar set that served the airfield. From Murder Point I could see the wreckage of the crashed C-130. The wind blew steadily all this day and by late afternoon my vision was becoming blurred. I returned to the Coast Guard station determined on the morrow to visit Engineer Hill where the Japanese made their last banzai attack.

Dawn brought a cloudless sky and no wind. I set out before daylight, climbed the Hogback in about half the time as on my first hike, and explored the lower part of Pendergast Ridge where I found a few Japanese trenches and foxholes. Then I crossed over to Clevesy Pass which was captured by Company E, 17th Infantry Regiment after the American breakout from Massacre Valley. (I served in Company E briefly in Korea ten years later). On the side of the road leading over the pass is a marker honoring Colonel Yasuyo Yamasaki, commander of the Japanese forces on Attu. The colonel arrived on Attu via submarine in April 1943. He perished along with his command. The US Navy erected this monument. From Clevesy Pass one has a grand view of all the scenes of action during the final days of the battle: Pendergast Ridge, the Fishhook, Siddens Valley, Sarana Nose and Valley, Chichagof Valley, Engineer Hill, and Point Able.

I wandered over Engineer Hill for an hour. There is a great deal of evidence here where the Japanese made their last, fatal charge: craters, artillery fragments, ·30 rifle cartridges (some dated 1942 and manufactured two miles from my present home in Colorado), foxholes, tent pegs, coal piles, and one underground Quonset. I stumbled upon a second monument and marker to Colonel Yamasaki, this one erected by the Japanese in post-war years. Only recently has a monument been erected in honor of American fighting men on Attu. It stands in front of the Coast Guard station.

From Engineer Hill I hiked along the neck of land that leads to Point Able. There, on the west side of the neck overlooking East Massacre Valley and the Hogback, was a complex of Japanese trenches and foxholes. A large emplacement marked the center of one trench. Its forward wall was partly reinforced with wood. Gazing down on the route of the American advance up Massacre Valley and considering that fog hid the Japanese positions, I could better appreciate the slowness of the American advance.

Crumbling trenches and foxholes scar the hillside overlooking East Massacre Valley.

Left: **Japanese communicating trench between Engineer Hill and Point Able.** *Right:* **Rocky foxhole near the top.**

Left: **Massacre Valley as it was before the cleanup.** *Right:* **Lethal rounds can still be found in Zwing Valley today.**

For the first and only time during my visit, the air became so warm I took off my parka. I decided to climb Point Able which had cost the Americans so dearly. A Japanese infantry company supported by artillery high up on the mountain held its ground against attack after attack for three days. Finally, an American company climbed the hill under cover of darkness and in hand-to-hand combat wiped out the enemy. I followed faint traces of vehicle tracks part way up the steep slope. After the tracks faded out, the rock turned to scree which made climbing tricky. About 300 feet below the peak, I came to a large 'nose' of rock. I worked my way around this bump and there, above it, eight Japanese foxholes had been carved out of the mountain. They overlooked the slope I had climbed.

I next worked around to the side of Point Able that looked over all of Massacre Valley and Bay. Here a natural rock outcropping formed a strong defensive wall. The space behind it was sufficiently large to hold a squad. These men could have observed every movement of the invader throughout the entire valley and bay. That evening I returned to the Loran station too late for dinner but a forgiving chef allowed me to search through the refrigerator.

On the following cloudy and windy day I decided to explore the length and breadth of West Massacre Valley and environs. I hiked around Coast Artillery Hill, so named because the Japanese had emplaced two 20mm guns on it. Strangely, the Japanese gunners abandoned the weapons when the American landings began. Carefully, I entered Zwing Valley which the Americans turned into a vast ammunition depot. Since the war, explosives have been neutralised but the possibility remains that live rounds lie hidden in the tundra. One is advised not to stray from the road in this area. Even from the road I saw shrapnel in all directions. Along the bases of Henderson Ridge and Black Mountain are dugout ammunition bunkers, each with two entrances. At first I thought these were Japanese but on closer inspection I concluded they were American — they are framed with heavy timbers, whereas the Japanese had little lumber on the island. Also, their exposures favoured the American advance, not the Japanese defense.

I climbed Black Mountain expecting to find a multitude of Japanese defensive works. I was disappointed. I came across only one small trench system with several foxholes. From the mountain I could look down on the approaches to Jarmin Pass. This area is still plastered with shell craters. The sight makes one thoughtful. Also from Black Mountain I could see the west portal of a 3,133-foot-long bomb-proof storage tunnel the Americans cut through a ridge near Clevesy Pass. This portal is now blocked but the east portal is still open. I did not have the opportunity to see the latter. A Coast Guard

A collapsed Japanese bunker in Jarmin Pass oriented to cover the ground right out to Massacre Bay.

Relics found by Erwin Thompson scattered nearby: a Japanese mortar shell carrier and parts from a cooking stove.

Upper East Holtz Valley with the old engineers' bridge crossing the O'Donnell Creek.

The beginning . . . and the end. West Holtz Valley — where the Japanese first landed and where the American northern force came ashore to recapture the island.

man told me he and others had inspected it and that the tunnel now has water in it, a sort of underground lake. On this day I returned to the station in plenty of time for the evening meal.

The week passed all too quickly and there was much more that I wanted to see. Plane day dawned with a heavy fog hiding the sun. Regretfully, I packed up and said my goodbyes. By noon, the fog had lifted to about 1,000 feet, the minimum required for landing at Attu. In mid-afternoon, however, Alaska's famous Reeves Airline radioed that it would not send the plane to Attu. Reprieved! I happily unpacked and made plans for the morrow.

Another foggy day. I set out well before daylight and hiked up West Massacre Valley, then proceeded toward Jarmin Pass where the American northern and southern landing forces met after a week of fighting. Once in the pass I nosed around. Many ·30 cartridges were scattered in the area. I followed a stretch of barbed wire to see where it led. It did not go very far, but on returning to the road I stumbled on a large Japanese bunker that commanded West Massacre Valley all the way to the Pacific. The structure was about fifteen feet square with earthern walls. A large embrasure faced the valley. The log and earth roof had collapsed hiding whatever might still be in it. At the rear a personnel trench had been cut in the rock leading to an entrance. In the trench lay the parts of a small iron heating stove. I examined it carefully but the only markings were two stars. In front of the emplacement were two metal containers. Later, the US Army's Center of Military History identified pictures of them as Japanese containers for mortar rounds.

Following this exciting discovery I continued through Jarmin Pass to an overlook that provided a stunning view of East Holtz Valley (now called O'Donnell Valley). Much of the big army bridge across O'Donnell Creek remains but it is not passable. I could not make out the outline of the airfield the Japanese were constructing in 1943. This was a most worthwhile day. I was happier than ever that fog had cancelled the plane. In the evening I studied my maps and decided if I left the station an hour before daylight I could probably reach West Holtz Valley where the Japanese had first landed and near where the American northern landing force had come ashore at Red Beach.

The dash to West Holtz Bay took place the following day. I started well before daylight. When dawn came, it came ominously. A heavy cloud cover smothered the earth. I travelled as rapidly as possible, not stopping for any sights or sites; up West Massacre Valley, past Black Mountain, through Jarmin Pass, across East Holtz Valley, where I had to wade several shallow but rapid-flowing creeks, over and around the Holtz hogback (Moore Ridge), and, there, lay West Holtz Valley and Bay. I went crazy with the camera for I knew I'd not see that historic site again. Following a chocolate bar lunch, I began the hike home. Then the rain started. It rained and it rained, heavier and heavier. Rain and wind. I had never been so wet before except during a typhoon on Okinawa many years earlier. When I got to my room and took off my clothes and boots, great puddles covered the floor. But I felt I had made it.

I left Attu the next day on a Reeves plane. I was sorry to leave but when I expressed this sentiment to Skipper Wilson, he looked at me in amazement. Sorry to leave Attu! But I remember it with nostalgia. It is a wild but fascinating place where one of the bloodiest battles of World War II in the Pacific was fought on this remote island at the end of the world.

STAATSVERMÖGEN DER DDR

KNOWN TO GOD, UNKNOWN TO MAN

BY DETECTIVE CONSTABLE ANDREW GREENSLADE

When the telephone rings 'From Work' on your day off, it usually means that you're in the money or in the mire and so it was with no little trepidation that I answered the call that day — on Thursday, July 23, 1987. However, it was to trigger off what I can only describe as one of the most absorbing 'Jobs' I have undertaken in my service as an officer with South Yorkshire Police and currently with Doncaster CID.

The story began to unfold that a discovery of human remains had been made on Hatfield Moors at a place known locally as Packards Moor, near the former Royal Air Force base at Lindholme, now the location of one of Her Majesty's prisons. The area in question, a desolate expanse of peat moor, covers an area of over five square miles centred on the market town of Thorne and surrounding villages.

Now that the moor has been drained, as far as the eye can see low walls made entirely of peat cross the area. Miles of thick brown compost, which ends its days spread liberally on one's roses, lie turned from the depths to the surface by mechanical caterpillar-shod diggers. For centuries the entire area was an uninviting wasteland of marsh and quagmire; a depressingly atmospheric place where even the wildlife take an alternative path.

Little or no public concern was raised when in 1938 the Air Ministry purchased the 400-acre tract of moor which became RAF Hatfield Woodhouse. Subsequently on August 18, 1940 the airfield was renamed RAF Lindholme to avoid confusion with Hatfield in Hertfordshire where the Mosquito was then being built. During war years much of the area was covered in standing surface

Top: **An unknown airman is carried to his last resting place in the station churchyard of St Oswald's by a bearer party from RAF Finningley.** *Above:* **His previous grave for more than forty years was here on the peat moor just east of another WWII RAF base in Yorkshire — Lindholme — in recent years used as an emergency landing ground for Finningley.**

water up to some three feet above liquid peat and, where more firm ground prevailed, young silver birch trees and fern vegetation flourished. Since then and up until the present day the moors bordering the airfield to its eastern side were drained and excavated to provide fuel and, more recently, commercial compost. Now the diggers, working in twelve-hour shifts, cut swathes removing two to three feet at a time, depositing the peat in brick-like form in a wall at the side of the excavated trench, where it is left to dry out naturally.

It was purely by keen observation that an employee of the moors' current owners, Fison Peatworks, made the discovery. Paul Marshall, working at a depth of approximately seven to nine feet from its original level, noticed what appeared to be human remains protruding from the bottom and side of the channel he had just cut. He immediately stopped his machine, the police were contacted and the investigation began in earnest.

It was Detective Chief Inspector Alan Simpson who, knowing of my interest in such matters, arranged for me to attend at 'the scene' that day and to start to try and piece the jigsaw together. The day was typically grey and foreboding as we squelched across the moor, a graveyard which claimed numerous aircraft and crews from the war years and after. As far as the police are concerned, the discovery of human remains obviously starts warning bells ringing, and senior officers, detectives and the uniformed branch, attend in order to establish whether there is any apparent 'suspicious nature' to the death. It was therefore perhaps a little amusing to see the procession of 'Bobbies', wellie-clad, tramping across the cloying peat to the excavation site.

We established that the remains, sitting in an upright position with legs buckled underneath, were apparently clothed in a leather flying jacket and herringbone-weave trousers and, given the area's wartime connections and the fact that the remains lay one mile south-east of the airfield and directly in line with the short runway, our thoughts were logically drawn to the conclusion that we had discovered the last resting place of an unfortunate aviator. The Ministry of Defence was informed without delay and any further examination ceased until the appropriate licence to excavate a probable war grave was obtained, such sites being now protected by the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 to prevent unauthorised exhumation of such remains. This, together with the predictable torrential summer downpour, put paid to that first day's investigation. The site was covered over and rain stopped play.

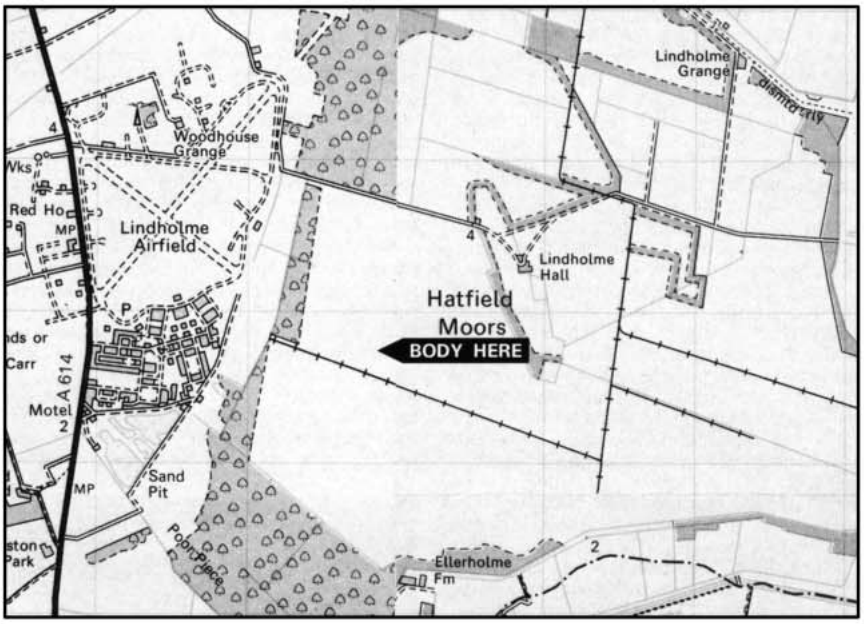
Friday saw the weather worsen and made traversing the moor nigh on impossible, presenting a very real danger of sinking — like the unfortunate individual we were investigating — without a trace!

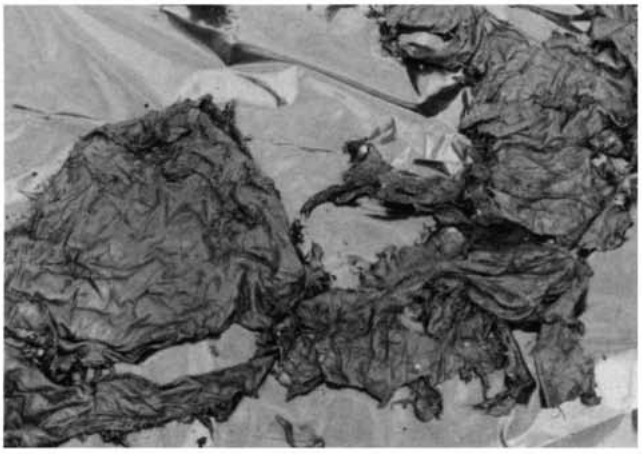
After these initial difficulties, recovery began in earnest on Saturday, July 25 and the slow process of extracting the poor fellow from his lonely grave commenced. A large plastic sheet was laid beside the site and slowly the pieces were fitted together to form over 98 per cent of an entire skeleton. It was clearly established from the outset, by the position of the body and the nature of breakages to major bones, femurs, pelvis, etc., that this body had reached its resting place after a considerable impact with the ground, consistent with having fallen from a height.

Together with the remains, the flying jacket and portions of trouser material were carefully recovered but, much to our surprise

The officers from the South Yorkshire police cheerfully begin their unenviable task together with Paul Marshall from Fisons. Detective Constable Andrew Greenslade, our author, on the right.

If you have ever wondered (like your editor) how that brown stuff that we put on the garden comes to be harvested, this is how it is done. The preservative qualities of peat were brought home to us all very dramatically in August 1984 with the discovery of 'Lindow Man' in similar circumstances near Wilmslow in Cheshire. The Press quickly dubbed that poor individual who had suffered a violent death a few million years ago 'Pete Marsh' — a ready-made name for the Second World War's peat bog discovery in July 1987. Lindholme airfield can be seen in the background.





The existence of a leather flying jacket of RAF-pattern and nature of the injuries was pretty conclusive evidence that the body was that of an airman who had jumped or fallen from an aircraft.

and disappointment, not one single item of identification came to light. No 'dog tags', personal effects or flying equipment. Not even uniform insignia, buttons or zips could be found. Despite painstaking sifting by hand, and extensive use of a metal detector over an area of some 15 cubic feet around the body, no further evidence of identity could be found. Finally, having been photographed in situ by the police photographers, our man, who had by now become affectionately (re-) named 'Pete Marsh', left the moors, well over four decades after he had arrived and was conveyed to Doncaster Royal Infirmary.

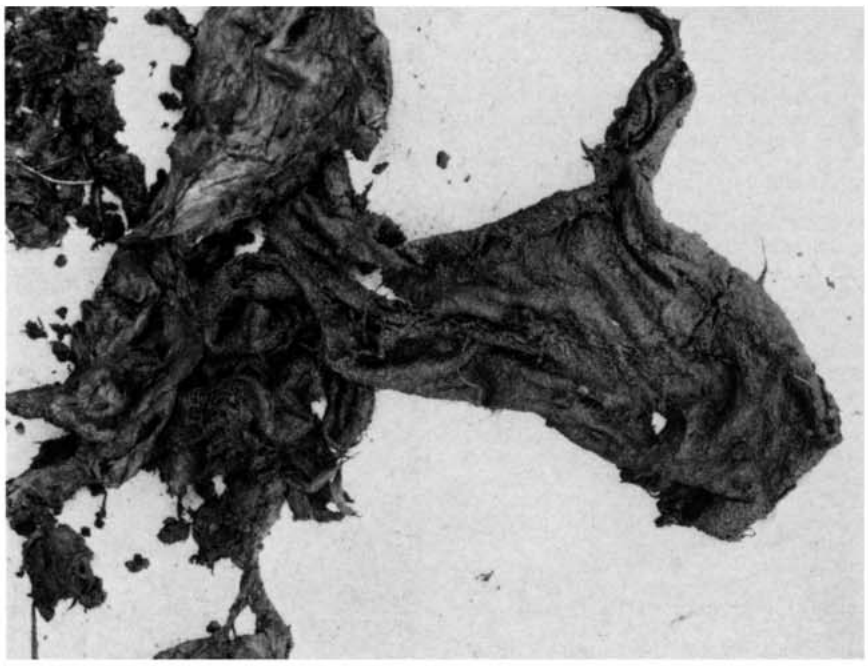
On August 10, 1987, the remains were subject to a post-mortem examination by consultant pathologist Dr John Finbow who's expertise revealed that our man had been approximately 18 years old, 5ft 6in to 5ft 8in tall, of slight build with short dark brown hair and slightly female features. His dentition was complete. Dr Finbow determined that the cause of death was 'trauma' meaning that although the man had suffered massive fractures to the lower limbs and pelvis, this was not in itself necessarily sufficient to cause death. In fact, given that the area may have been under water at that time, it is possible that this may have broken his fall somewhat and he could have drowned whilst unconscious. The body had been preserved in the peaty material in which it had lain and Dr Finbow concluded that its condition was consistent with death having occurred within the years encompassing the Second World War.

Meanwhile I was fortunate enough to be given leave to attend the Royal Air Force Museum at Hendon and there saw Anthony Harold, Keeper of Art and an authority on flying clothing. Mr Harold positively identified the jacket as being an RAF thermally-insulated jacket circa 1938-1942 as typically issued to bomber aircrew of the period, confirmed by the type of material — sheepskin with a fleece of a distinctive honey colour — the type of seams and the shape of the pattern cut segments. Furthermore he identified what we had assumed to be trouser material as being in fact combination underwear or 'Long Johns' in a herringbone pattern and often worn, provided from home, as a foundation garment for bomber crewmen. Whilst still at Hendon I was able to examine wartime crash record cards with Peter Elliott in the museum's extensive records/reference library, and spent many hours glued to a microfiche screen sifting recorded crashes at and in the vicinity of Lindholme.

Back in Yorkshire much local media interest was generated and assistance from the general public was requested through radio and newspapers. A surprisingly large number of people from all over the country contacted me with snippets of information and memories. There followed months of enquiries with the assistance of the Royal Air Force and especially Steven Bryant S10 (Air), and Eric Munday of the Air Historical Branch, Ministry of Defence, in London, to try to establish an identity. Eric Munday pointed out that 'ever since the Second World War, it has been possible to buy surplus Service-issue clothing in various stores. In the early post-war years, it was common for persons to buy surplus clothing to augment their civilian clothing ration. This was particularly true of building and agricultural workers who required warm robust clothing in their daily work, and Service-issue clothing was ideal. RAF flying jackets were particularly favoured by motor cyclists and truck drivers. The body could therefore have been that of a civilian who happened to be wearing surplus RAF clothing.'

Mr Munday also advised that 'the possibility also had to be considered that the body was that of a German airman who had been wearing an RAF flying jacket. Airmen of both sides sometimes wore equipment of their opponents — Guy Gibson, for example, related in his autobiography that he regularly wore a Luftwaffe Mae West because he thought it more efficient than the RAF version. Something of a mystery was the fact that no RAF battledress or other items of clothing were present when the body was found.'

He went on to explain that 'at one time at Lindholme there had been based squadrons of the Polish Air Force, which had flown in Bomber Command during the war. These were No. 304 Squadron based at Lindholme between July 1941 and May 1942, and No. 305, based there between July 1941 and July 1942. Both squadrons had been equipped with Wellingtons during their stay at Lindholme; No. 304 was transferred to Coastal Command on leaving the airfield, while No. 305 operated from other bases in Bomber Command until August 1943. In that month it was re-equipped with Mitchells and transferred to the Second Tactical Air Force. The operations carried out by Bomber Command during the period when the Polish squadrons were based at Lindholme included attacks on ports on the Continent of Europe e.g. Rotterdam, Calais, Emden and Kiel. There were operations to lay mines — known to the RAF as 'Gardening' — in lanes and by enemy shipping and off the harbours. A series of highly successful and damaging raids were carried out in March and April of 1942 against the Baltic ports of Lübeck and



The absence of other clothing, save for this pair of Long Johns, and any personal effects compounded the mystery as to the identity of the wearer or the circumstances preceding his demise.

Piece by piece the remains were exhumed, the human jigsaw taking shape until it was 98 percent complete.

Rostock. On the night of May 30/31, 1942 came the celebrated 1,000 bomber raid on Cologne, something of a turning point in the fortunes of Bomber Command.

'After the Polish squadrons left, the airfield at Lindholme had been used by No. 1656 Conversion Unit. The function of a conversion unit was to take the crews who had completed their training on twin-engined aircraft such as Wellingtons and Whitleys at operational training units, and convert them to flying the longer and more complicated four-engined bombers used by Bomber Command. These were the Stirlings, Halifaxes and Lancasters. The crews which came from the OTUs consisted of five men — pilot, navigator, wireless operator, bomb aimer and a gunner. At the conversion unit they gained two further members — another gunner and a flight engineer. The latter became the pilot's assistant in flying the longer aircraft. He often handled the throttles; he managed the more complicated fuel systems fitted in the longer aircraft. He also carried out, where possible, running repairs to aircraft equipment which became defective in flight. The records of No. 1656 CU were also examined, without any success.' Eric Munday said that 'a number of its planes had crashed, but a search of the records did not indicate that any of its personnel were missing in circumstances which matched those described.'

It seemed almost incredible that no name could be put to an airman lost over England in such circumstances but, in spite of the exhaustive searches of every available record, this turned out to be the case.

On October 12, 1987 Her Majesty's Coroner, Mr Kenneth Potter, convened his Court at Doncaster and, after hearing the evidence announced an 'open verdict' assuming the body to be that of an airman of the Royal Air Force who was serving in the Second World War at the time of his death. It was concluded that in view of the number of sorties flown from this area, both in training and in earnest during the war, that a likely scenario was of an aircraft returning battle-damaged, in distress or even simply lost, and that a crew member may have fallen or been flung from such an aircraft in the process of crashing at a site which is still unknown. Given certain circumstances of an aircraft falling in flames to destruction, a crew member may even have leapt into space without a parachute, having decided upon a lesser fate rather than being burned alive. Given the liquid motion of the peaty bog in which the body fell, heavier items of clothing or equipment may have been lost to a depth of over 30 feet.

The Coroner's conclusion provided sufficient evidence for the Royal Air Force to officially carry out the final chapter of this intriguing mystery and it was on a cold grey Armistice Day in November that our airman was laid to rest with full military honours at St Oswald's Church, Finningley. The coffin was borne by a pilot, a navigator and four non-commissioned aircrew members, in a manner befitting his ultimate sacrifice for our country, the brass plate simply inscribed 'Identity Unknown'. Now a beautiful Italian marble headstone stands over the grave and on the stone are inscribed these few words: 'An airman of the 1939-1945 war. KNOWN UNTO GOD.'

For me, although this was a fitting and satisfactory conclusion, I was obviously disappointed in being unable to establish this young man's identity. As fate would have it I never did get to see the funeral which had taken so much to achieve for I, too, had found myself in Doncaster Royal Infirmary thanks to the action of one of those worthy people for whom such gallant men fought and died!

In spite of strenuous efforts to put a name to 'Pete Marsh' the search proved fruitless and he was interred next to another recent burial of a long-lost airman of the Second World War, that of Pilot Officer Charles Barber whose recovery we reported on in Issue No. 56. The simple inscription: 'An Airman of the 1939-45 War . . . Known Unto God'.

THE MUNICH CRISIS

BY KAREL MARGRY

On November 5, 1937, Hitler had disclosed to his generals his intention to overthrow Czechoslovakia, if necessary by war, and incorporate it with the Reich.

The Czech republic, as it existed since 1918, included large German, Polish, Hungarian and Ukrainian minorities. The 3½ million German-speaking Czechs lived largely in the Sudetenland, the borderlands of Bohemia and Moravia. This horseshoe-shaped region was vital to the Czech state, both economically and militarily: it contained much of the country's industry and, perhaps even more important, in it lay the strong frontier fortifications which were the backbone of the whole of the Czech defence system.

The Sudeten Germans were organised in 1933 in the Sudetendeutsche Heimatfront, founded by Konrad Henlein. Renamed the Sudetendeutsche Partei, it came under increasing Nazi influence and gained 1,250,000 votes in the 1935 elections, becoming the second largest party in parliament. Supported from the Reich, both financially and with propaganda, it was a useful tool in Hitler's scheme for conquest. His policy was to have the Sudeten Germans demand ever-increasing minority rights — demands designed to be turned down — hoping to create so much tension and unrest that in the end he could intervene and act as saviour of his fellow Germans.

In 1935, looking for allies against possible foreign aggression, Czechoslovakia had joined the French-Russian defensive Alliance. But France was unwilling to go to war without Britain, which was not in any alliance with, and thus without obligation to, Czechoslovakia. Russia would only come to assist if France initiated help and, having no common border with Czechoslovakia, would have to negotiate with other countries — Poland or Rumania — for passage of troops.

In April 1938, on Berlin's instructions, Henlein, in a speech at Karlsbad, proclaimed his latest demands: full self-government for the Sudeten Germans within the Czech state and freedom to adhere to Nazi ideology. The Czech government, headed by President Eduard Beneš and Prime Minister Milan Hodža, had negotiated on and off with the Sudeten Germans since 1936 and tried its best to reach a settlement. But on May 20, when exaggerated reports of German troop movements led to a partial Czech mobilisation, Henlein immediately suspended negotiations.

Meanwhile, on May 30, Hitler signed Fall Grün (Case Green), his secret plan for the attack on Czechoslovakia.

The May crisis alerted the world to the Sudeten problem. As negotiations were resumed in June, Britain and France began pressing the Czech government to accede to

With the future of Europe in the balance, the first of the three conferences which held the attention of the world in September 1938 took place at the Berghof on the 15th. *Top:* **Here Neville Chamberlain leaves his hotel in Berchtesgaden for the short drive up the Obersalzberg to see 'Herr Hitler'. (Associated Press)** *Above:* **Somewhat changed in appearance, the hotel bore the insignia of the old SHAEF organisation, since adopted by the US Army in Europe, when we took our comparison.**

The meeting had been convened at the wish of Chamberlain and, after an arduous seven-hour flight to Munich, the British Prime Minister had spent another three hours travelling to Berchtesgaden by train. Ribbentrop (on Chamberlain's left), the German Foreign Minister, and the Minister of State, Dr Otto Meissner, were at the station to greet him but Hitler was noticeably absent — a touch of oneupmanship typical of Hitler's dealings with his contemporaries. (Associated Press)

the Sudeten-German wishes. On July 20, Britain proposed Lord Runciman as mediator between the two Czech parties. Runciman's mission resulted on September 5 in the acceptance by the Hodža government of the so-called 'fourth plan', which went very far in conceding to Henlein's Karlsbad demands. But an agreement was the very thing Hitler did not want and Henlein soon found an excuse to again break off negotiations.

The crisis that was to hold Europe in its grip for 18 days began on September 12. On that day, at the Nuremberg party rallies, Hitler made a brutally abusive speech, denouncing the Czech government and demanding 'justice' for the Sudeten Germans. For the first time, he openly spoke of cession of the region to Germany.

Two days later, the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, on his own initiative sent a message to Hitler, asking for a meeting to discuss the current danger to peace in Europe. The proposal took Hitler completely by surprise, but he accepted. Chamberlain flew to Munich on the 15th and was received by Hitler at the Berghof on the Obersalzberg. It was their first ever meeting.

Hitler would only talk about the Sudeten question. In a long monologue, he said he would face any risk, even that of war, to bring the Sudeten Germans back into the Reich. The rights of the Polish and Hungarian minorities in the Czech state could not be ignored in the long run either, but Czech 'atrocities' against the Sudeten Germans were forcing him to act without delay. Chamberlain, who firmly believed that the Sudetenland could and should not be defended, answered that he had no objection to separation provided the practical problems of such an operation could be solved. However, he would have to consult his Cabinet first, and so they agreed to meet again shortly. When Chamberlain asked Hitler not to invade Czechoslovakia in the intervening days, Hitler (knowing full well that his armies could not be ready before September 28 anyhow) gave his word. Chamberlain thus came back with the illusion of having won a valuable respite.

On his return, he and his Cabinet conferred with the French government of Premier Edouard Daladier and, on September 19, London and Paris produced a proposal which they put to Prague. If Czechoslovakia cooperated in a cession of the German-majority districts of Sudetenland, Britain and France would guarantee the country's new frontiers.

This ultimatum-like proposal presented the Czech Cabinet with a cruel dilemma. A refusal would mean war with Germany. The Czech general staff was consulted and advised fighting only if France stood by her commitments. Trusting that she would, Beneš and Hodža at first, on the 20th, turned down the proposal. But in a night of diplomatic frenzy, it was made clear to them that France was not prepared to go to war for the Sudetenland. This left them no choice. Bitterly disillusioned, they accepted the Anglo-French proposal on the 21st. Immediately, mass demonstrations broke out in Prague, forcing the Hodža Cabinet to resign next morning. The new government, quickly formed by General Jan Syrový, was clearly more prepared to defend the country. The next day, September 23, after border incidents at Asch and Eger, it ordered the general mobilisation of the Czech armed forces.

Meanwhile, on the 22nd, Chamberlain had returned to Germany for his appointment with Hitler. This time they met at Bad Godesberg, on the banks of the Rhine near Cologne. The British stayed at Hotel Petersberg, near the famous Drachenfels rock, but the talks were held at Hotel Dreesen on the opposite bank, the delegation being ferried across by motor launch.

The river Rhine formed the backdrop for the next meeting between the two leaders held 300 miles away a week later at the Hotel Dreesen at Bad Godesberg. It was one of Hitler's favourite watering holes and was the hotel from where he had set out on the night of June 29-30, 1934 to carry out the Blood Purge of the SA. The first session took place on the afternoon of September 22 at which Chamberlain was shocked to discover that, since their previous meeting, Hitler had now decided to move the goalposts and introduce new demands. (Associated Press)

Next morning, Chamberlain sent a letter across the river from his own hotel on the eastern bank proposing the traditional British compromise. This Hitler rejected out of hand, again playing the war of nerves by keeping the Prime Minister waiting all day for a reply. Not until late evening did Chamberlain return with Sir Neville Henderson (left), the British Ambassador in Berlin. (In the background on the left the official German interpreter Dr Paul Schmidt.) The second meeting began at 10.30 p.m., the somewhat heated exchanges going on for three hours until Chamberlain declared that 'there was no point in continuing the conversation'. He told Hitler that 'he was going away with a heavy heart for the hopes with which he had come to Germany were destroyed'. (Associated Press)

To their astonishment and chagrin, the Czech acceptance of cession of the Sudetenland to Germany no longer satisfied Hitler. He now insisted on a settlement of the Polish and Hungarian claims on Czech territory in connection with the Sudeten question. After two long conferences and an interchange of letters, Hitler, on the 23rd, embodied his new demands in a memorandum and a map showing marked areas that would be occupied by German troops not later than October 1 and others where a plebiscite should be held to decide whether they would remain Czech or become German.

Chamberlain returned to London on September 24, to deliberate with his Cabinet and with the French. Hitler's Godesberg memorandum was put to Prague and categorically rejected on the 25th.

Next day, Hitler delivered a fanatical speech at the Berlin Sportpalast, full of hate against the Czechs and declaring that the Sudetenland would be in German hands, by 'peace or war', on October 1.

With German troops deploying for attack along the Czech border and the Czech Army mobilising, war now seemed inevitable. For the many millions of people in western Europe, this was the peak of the crisis. French reserve units were dispatched to man the Maginot Line and the mobilisation of the British fleet was ordered. These were the days of greatest tension.

At this moment, the Italian Fascist dictator, Benito Mussolini, stepped in. In response to an official British request, the Duce proposed to Hitler an international conference to solve the crisis. When Mussolini agreed to represent Italy in person, Hitler accepted. He invited Italy, Britain and France to a four-party conference, to be held at Munich. Czechoslovakia was not invited.

The news of a conference was everywhere in Europe received with great relief. Everywhere, except in Prague. As a result of Beneš' anguished pleas that his country should be heard, the Czechs were, at the last hour, advised by London to send two 'observers' to Munich.

That evening, in Berlin, a scenario for the

On Monday, September 26, Hitler was scheduled to speak on the subject of Czechoslovakia at a mass meeting in the Berlin Sportspalaast. William Shirer, the American CBS correspondent, was there to give a running broadcast on the speech. Sitting in the balcony just above the rostrum, he witnessed one of the Führer's most virulent outbursts, with Hitler 'shouting and shreiking in the worst paroxysm I had ever seen him in. He venomously hurled personal insults at "Herr Benes", and declared that the issue of war or peace was now up to the Czech President.'

And so to Munich. News of the Four Power conference promoted by Mussolini was received with relief; at last their seemed a glimmer of hope to lighten the dark shadow which had descended over Europe. The Duce arrived in style, basking in the limelight, although the fifth power involved in the dispute — Czechoslovakia — was not invited. Her fate was to be decided 'in absentia'. Here the two dictators drive from the Hauptbahnhof having left by the side exit.

conference was drawn up by Hitler's deputy Hermann Göring, the German ex-Foreign Minister Constantin von Neurath and the State Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Ernst von Weiszäcker. It included a specification of the German demands: initial occupation of four border districts between October 1 and 7; subsequent plebiscites in other areas shown on an accompanying map; and cession to Germany of areas with a German-majority vote. The text of this memorandum was quickly telephoned to Mussolini, who had asked for such information to be sent to him before he left Rome.

Mussolini came to Germany by train. He was met by Hitler at Kiefersfelden, on the old Austro-German border, and the two dictators travelled to Munich together in Hitler's Sonderzug. On the journey, Hitler explained his demands to the Duce on an ethnographic map of Czechoslovakia.

The French and British delegations came to Munich by air, the British arriving last and being driven, through throngs of cheering crowds, directly to the conference.

The meeting was held at the Führerbau, Hitler's new party headquarters, built adjacent to the Brown House and facing the famous Königsplatz. His personal office served as conference room.

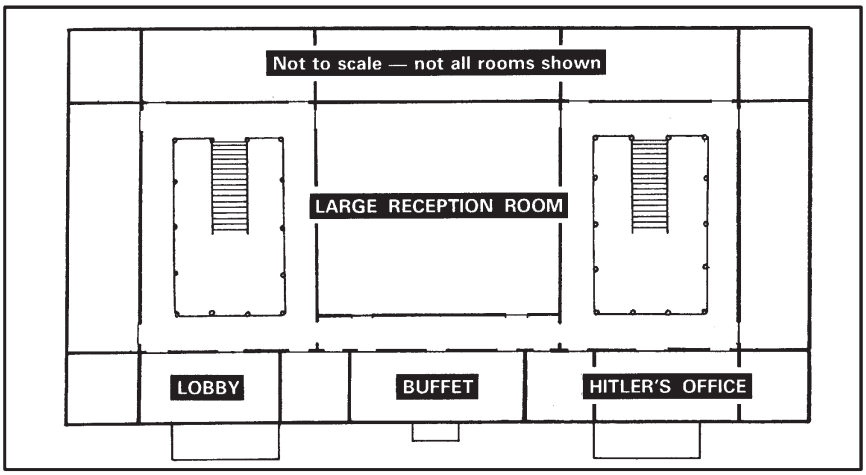
The first session, from noon to 3 p.m., was behind closed doors. The only ones present were: for Britain: Chamberlain and Sir Horace Wilson, his closest consultant (officially, he was the Prime Minister's Chief Industrial Adviser); for France: Daladier and Alexis Léger, the Secretary-General of his Foreign Ministry (both the British and the French Foreign Ministers, Lord Halifax and Georges Bonnet, had remained at home); for Italy: Mussolini and Count Galeazzo Ciano, his Foreign Minister and son-in-law; for Germany: Hitler, his Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop and, most likely (from analysis of the photos taken), also von Weiszäcker, the State Secretary; finally, there was Paul Otto Schmidt, the official German interpreter.

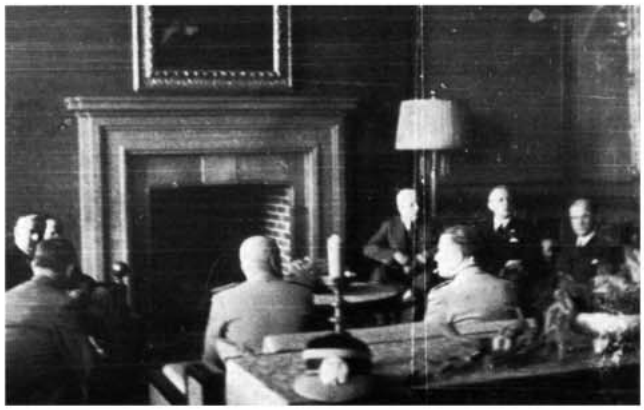
The players assemble at the Führerbau, built on the Königsplatz in 1935-37 as the new and larger national headquarters of the NSDAP after the Brown House nearby had become too small. Chamberlain arrived with Ribbentrop having come directly from the airport. Today the building houses the State High School for Music but the exterior is little changed except for the removal of the eagles and swastikas from over the doorways.

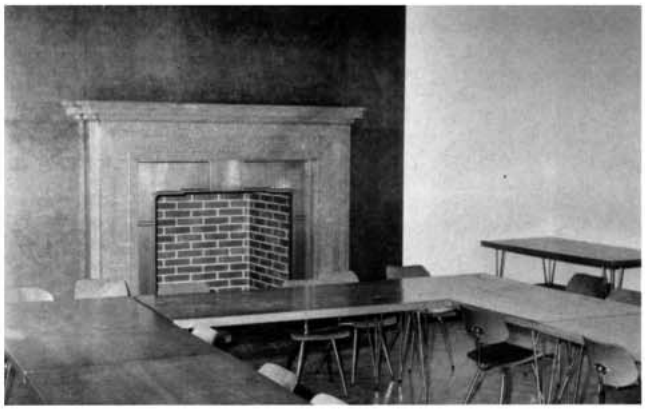
The small talk before the big talk was held in the lobby on the first floor (see plan). Today it is the school library but unfortunately bookcases and a glass screen prevent taking exactly the same view today.

The ten men simply sat down in armchairs around the fireplace. There was no agenda, no chairman, conversation jumped back and forth. The discussion had hardly begun, when Mussolini produced the draft of German demands which had been drawn up in Berlin and transmitted to him. Presenting it as if it were his own, he put it as his proposed settlement. Daladier and Chamberlain accepted it at once as a basis for discussion. After Chamberlain had pleaded in vain for a Czech representative to be included in the talks, the meeting was adjourned so that the 'Mussolini' proposal could be distributed and studied.

During the recess, the French and British delegations went back to their assigned hotels, the Vierjahreszeiten and the Regina Palace respectively, while Mussolini, as honoured guest, had lunch with Hitler at the Führer's private apartment on Prinzregentenstrasse.



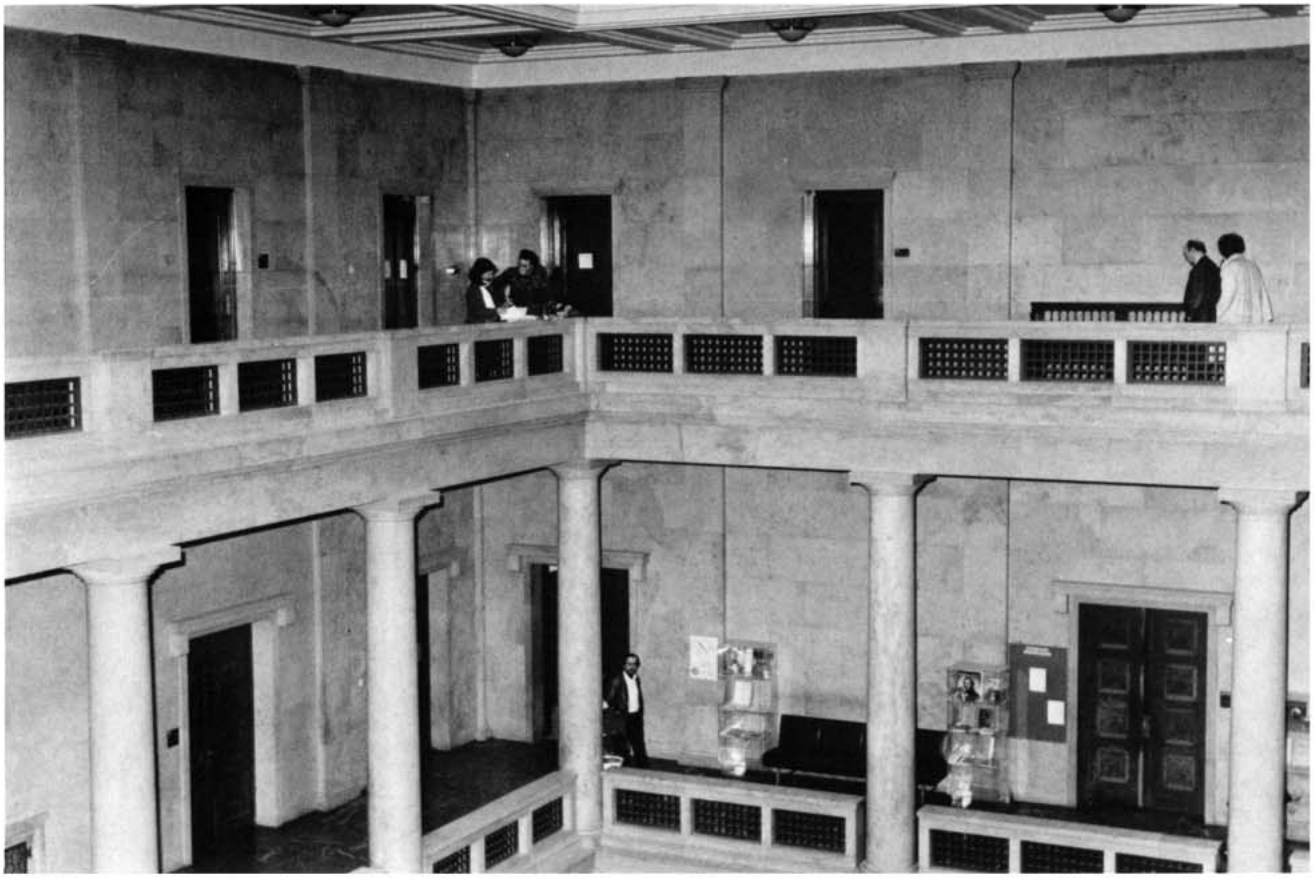




The first session is about to begin. After this picture was taken, the doors of the Arbeitzimmer were closed and only ten men remained inside: Wilson, Chamberlain, Hitler, Mussolini, Ciano, Daladier, Ribbentrop and Weizäcker (whose presence at this first meeting is disputed, but irrefutably proven by this photo). Not visible are Léger and Schmidt. Fifty years later the room where the fate of a nation was decided in a few short hours is now a simple classroom with nothing to record its historic past.

The first session over, it's home for lunch for B and A although a buffet was on offer in the hall.

The second session was a much more open affair with the various parties fragmenting into individual groups. Here the German party with Göring at the forefront carve up the country on a map of Czechoslovakia. Fortunately he had changed his uniform between sessions which makes it easier to segregate the otherwise uncaptioned frames into order.



Activity that Thursday centered on this gallery and, as afternoon became evening, delegates could be seen taking a breather on the balcony . . . Some even found time for a little comic relief!

After the banquet which followed the second round of talks, there was a delay of many hours while the final text of the agreement was being drawn up, duplicated and translated. This period of waiting was mostly spent in the central reception room on the first floor, which Hitler also used for his press conferences. Today the room is the school's concert hall and it has been completely refurbished.

The second session started at 4.30 p.m. The Berlin ambassadors of Britain, France and Italy joined the talks, as technical details of the cession and specific issues, such as compensation for Czech state property and the question of the Polish and Hungarian minorities, were discussed. As proposals needed drafting and translating, there began a constant to-ing and fro-ing between the conference room and ante-rooms. Legal advisers, secretaries and adjutants were allowed into the room and formed a tense audience around those seated. Soon the meeting became fragmented, virtually breaking up into little groups and becoming somewhat disorderly.

Meanwhile, the two Czech 'observers' — Vojtech Mastny, the Czech Minister to Germany, and Hubert Masařík, a Counsellor of the Foreign Ministry — had arrived from Prague. However, they were not permitted to enter into the discussions, but had to wait in another room while the fate of their country was debated.

By then, at the conference, a drafting committee had been formed to formulate the final agreement texts. While it worked, there was another recess. A grandiose state dinner had been laid on in the banqueting hall of the Führerbau. The British and French, making the excuse of needing the time to consult with their capitals, declined the invitation and returned to their hotels, leaving the Germans and Italians to dine among themselves.

When the delegations gathered again, there followed a delay of many hours, while the drafting committee worked hard to put the agreement with its supplements and annexes into proper shape in four languages. Finally, at about midnight, the delegations, by now rather weary, congregated in the conference room for the signing ceremony. This final session lasted till 1.30 a.m.

The agreement signed followed largely the proposal drafted in Berlin and put forward by Mussolini. Czechoslovakia would lose the Sudeten districts, some by immediate occupation by Germany starting on October 1, some after plebiscites to be held before the end of November under an international commission, to be set up by the Four Powers and Czechoslovakia. Points of dispute would be settled by this same commission. Britain and France would guarantee the new boundaries of the Czech state. Germany and Italy agreed to do the same, but only after the question of the other minorities had been settled too. This would for the time being be left to the Czech government. If it failed to reach an agreement with Poland or Hungary within three months, there would be another four-power meeting to resolve the conflict. Such was the price of appeasement.

Shortly afterwards, in a gloomy atmosphere after Hitler and Mussolini had left the room, Chamberlain and Daladier jointly broke the news to the Czech observers, Mastny and Masařík, and gave them a copy of the agreement. Next morning, the Czech government accepted the Munich terms. As General Syrový is said to have put it, his country had a choice between being murdered or committing suicide.

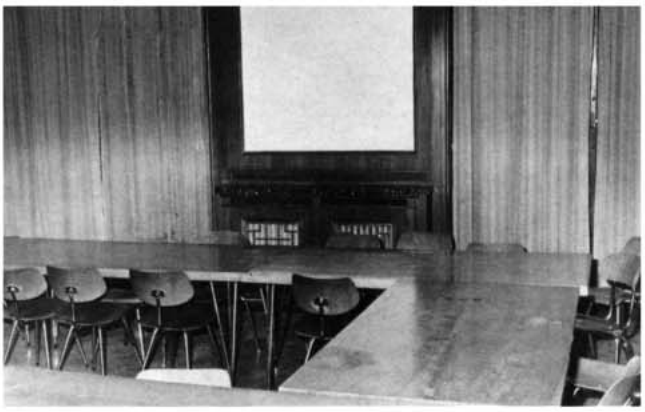
Elsewhere, throughout Europe, there was great rejoicing. War had been averted. Hitler, Mussolini, Daladier and Chamberlain returned to their capitals to receive a heroes' welcome. That morning, Chamberlain had

By the look of Ciano's weary posture, this shot would appear to have been taken at the final meeting which began around midnight.

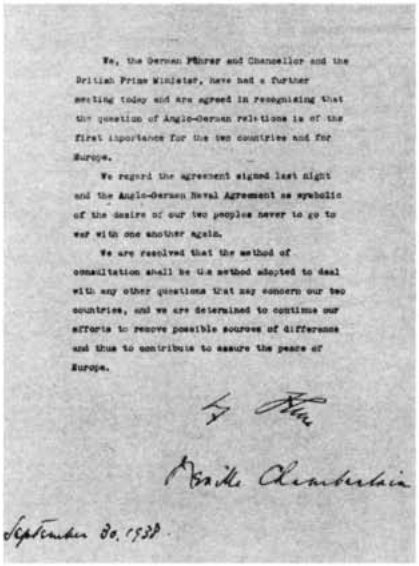
Out on the balcony, adjutants and various party officials awaited the predictable outcome but there was still about 90 minutes to go.

had a further meeting with Hitler at the latter's apartment at which he had Hitler sign the now famous declaration expressing 'the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again'.

Six months later, Hitler finished off Czechoslovakia. On March 14, 1939, he forced Slovakia to proclaim itself 'independent', under the puppet government of Josef Tiso, and permitted Hungary to occupy Ruthenia, the eastern tip of the country. Next day, March 15, his own armies marched into what was left of the Czech state, Bohemia and Moravia, and made it into a 'protectorate' of the Reich.



With the curtains closed to the crowds waiting outside on the Königsplatz, the final drama came at 1.30 a.m. on Friday morning. The documents to be signed had been already dated the 29th but everyone was really too tired to worry about the error. Hitler signed first, followed by Chamberlain, Mussolini and Daladier in that order.



We, the German Führer and Chancellor and the British Prime Minister, have had a further meeting today and are agreed in recognising that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for the two countries and for Europe.

We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.

We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe.

Neville Chamberlain

September 30, 1938.

The following morning the British Prime Minister called on Hitler at his private apartment on the Prinzregentenstrasse for an unscheduled meeting. Dr Schmidt, the interpreter, who had worked non-stop for some thirteen hours at the Führerbau was the sole witness. Chamberlain, exuberant in the thought that he had just secured the peace of the world, was anxious to add a final full stop to the proceedings. Hitler, 'pale and moody, listened absent-mindedly to Chamberlain's remarks about Anglo-German relations, disarmament and economic questions, contributing little . . .' wrote Schmidt in 1951. 'Towards the end of the conversation Chamberlain drew the famous Anglo-German Declaration from his pocket.' Chamberlain later said that Hitler eagerly assented to this, but Schmidt felt that he only agreed to the wording 'with a certain reluctance, and I believe he appended his signature only to please Chamberlain'. This was the piece of paper waved aloft when he returned to Heston (*see After the Battle No. 25*). Later Chamberlain spoke a few words from a first floor window of No. 10 Downing Street, adding that it was: 'peace *for* (not "in" as has often been misquoted) our time'. As far as Hitler was concerned, he later confided to the Hungarian Foreign Minister that he had not thought it possible that 'Czechoslovakia would be served up to me by her friends'. In fact the victory had been won too easily for him and Chamberlain's complaisance had taken him 'by surprise'. Today, with the benefit of access to the records of all the parties concerned, it is firmly believed that Germany would have only survived a matter of days had her 12 divisions had to fight the 100 French divisions then in being, and we know that war had only been stayed for six months. On October 3 Hitler crossed the frontier personally to celebrate his bloodless conquest, while many in Britain lauded Munich with thanksgiving. One voice spoke out; that of Winston Churchill who declared it to be 'a total, unmitigated defeat'.

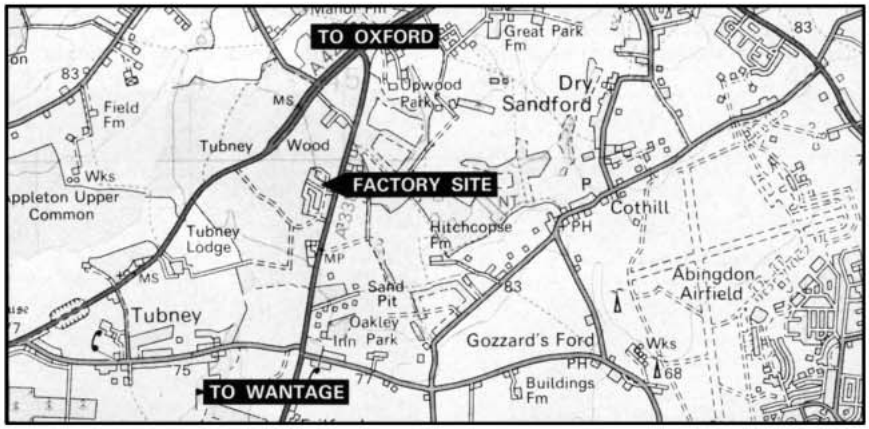
TIME WARP IN TUBNEY WOOD

Ten years ago, Kitchener Bergin introduced us to a semi-derelict ex-WWII dispersed factory built in Tubney Wood to the west of the A338 in Oxfordshire. At that time some of the brick-built buildings were rented out for storage but the wooden huts were empty and semi-derelict. Vandalism had begun to take place and we preserved several artefacts including a magnificent mural drawn by 'LAC' of the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA). Little was known locally of the history of the site which still had a 'Consul' fire-watchers shelter on one of the flat roofs. We recorded the scene photographically without really knowing the true significance of the site.

The news of the imminent sale of the complex by the Oxford college that owns it to developers, who were rumoured to have plans to demolish it and build a new trading estate, prompted Nigel Dawe to contact us to ask if there was anything we could do to save a unique piece of Second World War history. Nigel explained that research over recent years had revealed that this was one of the factories that worked round the clock making Bofors guns. He said that John Stearne of the Oxfordshire Museum at Woodstock had investigated its history and produced a short report from which we have been permitted to quote:

'The site lies on "the old Heath" in thick woodland to the west of the Oxford-Wantage road at map reference SU44859980 and consists of five long brick ranges', wrote Mr Stearne following his visit. 'Two buildings lie close to one another aligned east-west and two north-south. They have flat roofs with metal ventilators, few windows but a number have ventilation slits. There are steel ladders with hand rails giving access to the roofs. There is a concrete and pitch-lined static water tank, and also a small brick burner with a collapsed concrete roof. There is a small sewage works in the south-west part of the site. Also a number of wooden huts on brick pillars with concrete slots for bicycles.

'We interviewed Albert Johnson of Appleton who told us of his experiences as foreman



Kitchener Bergin, better known to his friends as Jim, steps back in time in Oxfordshire where a wartime satellite factory remains to be seen almost as it was when it was abandoned in 1945 . . . but for how long? The roof-mounted Consul fire-watchers shelter (*above*) stands like a forgotten sentinel guarding the site in Tubney Wood, a mile or so west of Abingdon airfield.

and second in command of the works in the 1940s. He said the decision to build the factory in 1940 was following saturation bombing by the Luftwaffe of Coventry in November. The machinery for the manufacture of Bofors anti-aircraft gun barrels was irreplaceable so the decision was taken to shift 50 per cent of it to a dispersed site in woodland in Oxfordshire. The factory was built by Benfields and Loxley, an Oxford firm. It was built with brick with an undulating concrete roof which would collect water and look like pools from the air. Large flower pots with coniferous trees growing in them were placed on the roof to camouflage it and it was thought that it was indistinguishable from surrounding woodland at more than 2500 feet. (Despite this they are clearly visible on the RAF verticals taken in 1947.)

'The works were completely electrified and there was an overhead electric crane running the full length of the buildings. The rough-outs of the barrels were cast in Sheffield and were brought in by road. The gun was designed by Mr Landstrut, a Swede. They were designed with a special rifling which made possible rapid fire. They were eight feet long. The barrels were removed from the gun after they had fired 500 rounds to cool off. A further 250 rounds would be fired and the barrels then scrapped. Mr Johnson remembers that there was a No. 1 shop where the "roughing up stage" was carried out and a No. 2 shop where the fitters made certain the barrels were properly finished off. The Nos. 3 and 4 shops were identical. They were AID inspected before they left the premises. He said that there was a firing range at Clacton where they were tested.

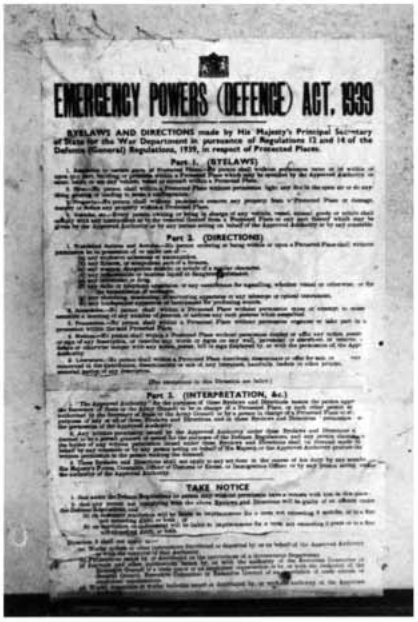
'There were 250-300 women in the factory, all skilled machinists, who came in by coaches from Wootton, Faringdon and Cowley. Many were evacuees from London. A number were girl servants from the big houses at Boarshill where they had been working a 16-hour day and were glad of the break! They were two 12-hour shifts: from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. and from 8.00 p.m. to 8.00 a.m., seven days a week. Mr Johnson thought this strained the health of his workers and brought the doctors in to cut back the hours. He pointed out that after eight hours' work the women got very tired so to begin with they cut back to six nights a week and then to a 5½-day week of 12 hours a day. As a result the production went up. When asked about wages Mr Johnson reckoned these were "bloody rubbish" as he put it. There used to be concerts for the night shift at 1.30 a.m. in the morning supplied by ENSA.

'Mr Johnson stated that he and his wife had come down from Coventry to Oxfordshire and had then stayed here. He recalled that a certain cinema had been showing *Gone with the Wind* and this had been destroyed by incendiary bombs. He had himself ended up in a bomb hole having driven into it in the dark. He also recalled the Home Guard. They were supplied with

Down below, the 300-foot-long assembly shops, where the largely female workforce once toiled on 12-hour shifts turning out Bofors gun barrels, are now mainly used for storage. The concrete roofs were provided with potted fir trees to help blend the buildings into the surroundings.

The freehold of the 15-acre site has always been held by Magdalen College but now the munitions factory is under offer to a private developer. As far as the planning laws are concerned, whatever use a building or site had in 1964 then that use has been established of right, and this cannot now be rescinded, however much the local authority may wish to do so. Therefore industrial use has been established for Tubney Wood and any purchaser would probably have an application granted to 'modernise', i.e. demolish, and be able to extend the area without restriction up to an additional 15 percent. No such application had been received by the Vale of White Horse planning authority at the time of writing (October 1988).

The engineering shop pictured in 1988 by Nigel Dawe.


EMERGENCY POWERS (DEFENCE) ACT, 1939

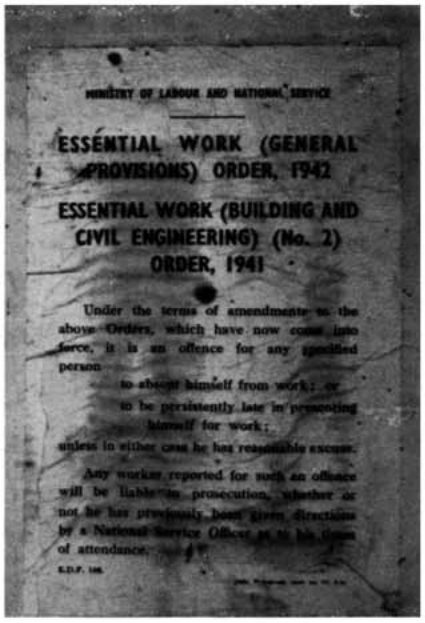
BYELAWS AND DIRECTIONS made by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the War Department in pursuance of Regulations 12 and 14 of the Defence (General) Regulations, 1939, in respect of Protected Places.

Part 1. (BYELAWS)

Part 2. (DIRECTIONS)

Part 3. (INTERPRETATION, &c.)

TAKE NOTICE


MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE

ESSENTIAL WORK (GENERAL PROVISIONS) ORDER, 1942

ESSENTIAL WORK (BUILDING AND CIVIL ENGINEERING) (No. 2) ORDER, 1941

Under the terms of amendments to the above Orders, which have now come into force, it is an offence for any specified person

to absent himself from work; or

to be persistently late in presenting himself for work;

unless in either case he has reasonable excuse.

Any worker reported for such an offence will be liable to prosecution, whether or not he has previously been given directions by a National Service Officer as to his hours of attendance.

guns but the officer held on to the bullets. Look, Duck and Vanish (L. D. and V.) was their motto. He recalled without affection a manager who was a Salvation Army member and was in charge of an ordnance factory! Towards the end of the war in 1944 he was moved onto Rolls-Royce Merlin aero engines at the Abingdon MG factory.'

In his letter to us Nigel explained that 'a group of prefabs were built in the wood just off the main road about half a mile from the factory site for senior personnel (including Mr Johnson). These were demolished some years ago after they became derelict and the site was developed for "expensive" houses. At the factory a loading gantry existed in the main yard/parking area and was removed for scrap about eight years ago. It consisted of four RSJ legs with a girder cross beam complete with block and tackle with a capacity of around five tons. The site also had its own surgery, brick built, which still stands opposite the main gate next to a corrugated iron garage-type structure which was the fire station for the site. This had a maintenance pit in the floor and a curved gantry went from directly over the pit around to the side where engines could be lowered on to the workbench with a block and tackle. A large brick building with a pitched roof was the gymnasium.

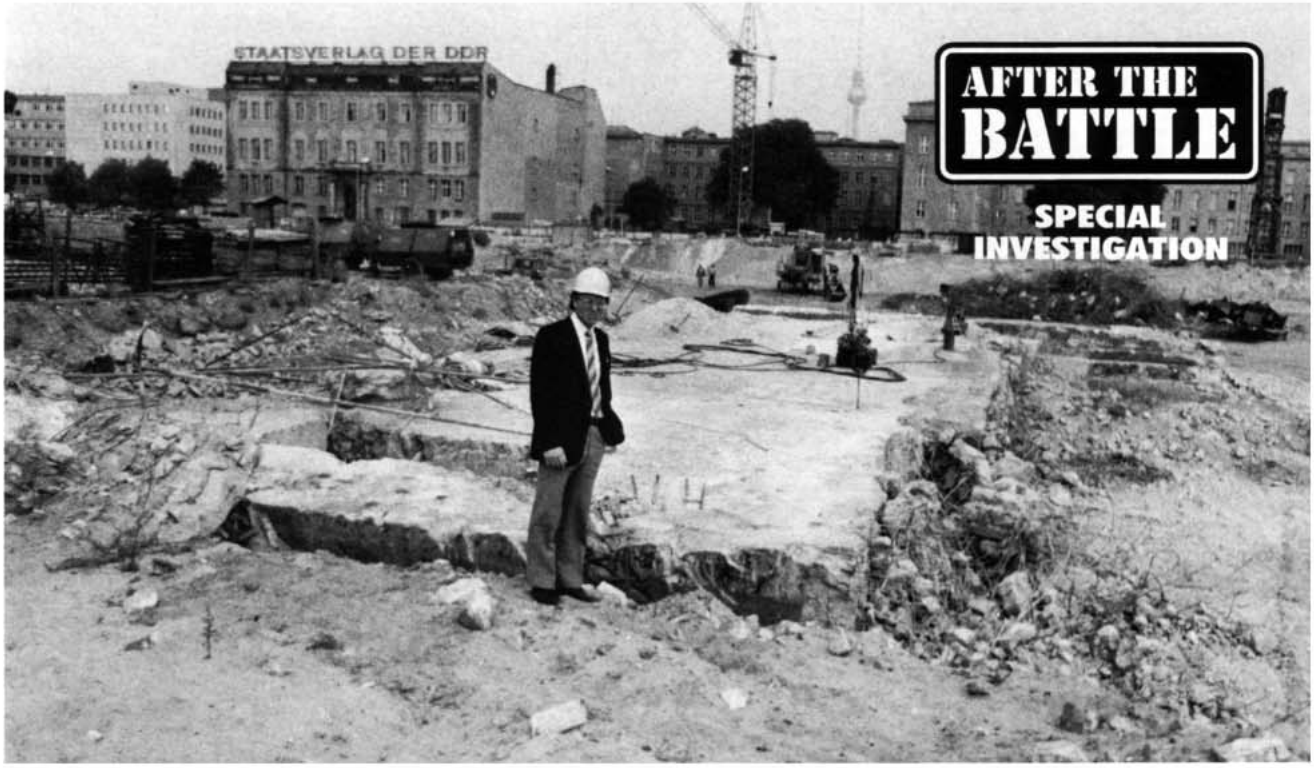
'Wooden army type huts housed the canteen, library, admin and some dormitory accommodation. Construction of the factory was completed by April 1941 when the machinery was moved in. Not bad going considering the two feet thick blastproof brick walls, at least one winter to work through, wartime shortages of materials and labour with brickwork and mortar as good today as it was in 1941, plus all the camouflaging that took place.'

Nigel said that he felt very strongly that such a historical site should be preserved and that he had written to the Department of the Environment with a view to getting it listed. However, rather disgustedly, he told us that 'after an English Heritage so-called expert visited Tubney Wood, they decided not to bother'.

The planned sale of the 15-acre site by Magdalen College is due for completion by the end of 1988 and, if the developers have their way, these photographs and our preserved mural (now mounted in our own staff room at Plaistow), may well soon be the only reminders of a small, yet once vital part of Britain's wartime munitions programme.

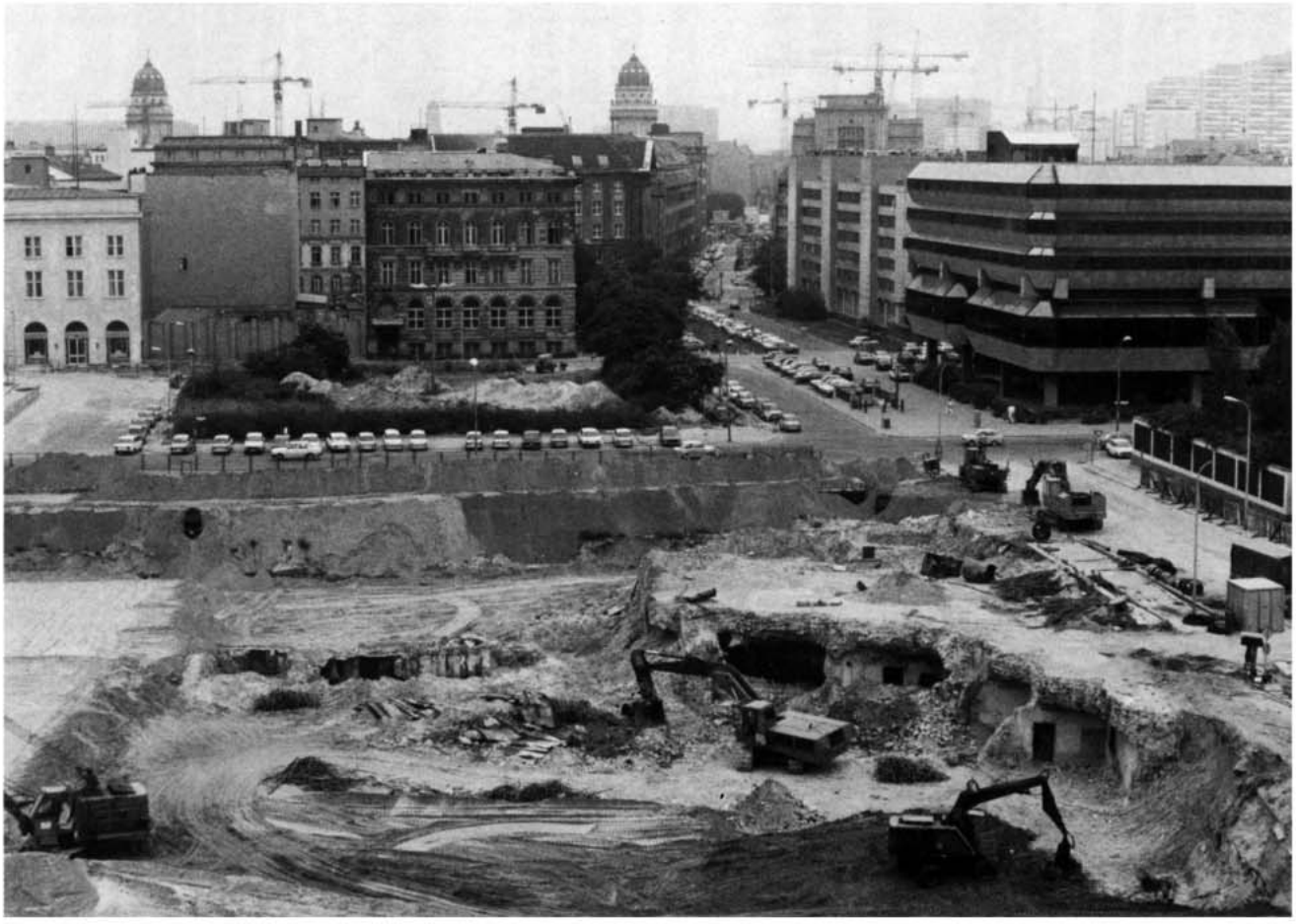
These pictures were taken in 1979 but those of the wooden huts no longer in use were already being vandalised and before long it was obvious that much would be lost. After taking photographs, living up to our reputation of 'rescuing the relics of heroism', we removed this charcoal mural, so evocative of the dark days of 1942, from the canteen. It now adorns the wall of our own, still proclaiming its apt message that 'It won't be long now'.

BACK TO THE BUNKER



Berlin: *top* **July 1945;** *above* **August 1988. Winston S. and Winston G. outside the garden exit of the Führerbunker.**

The partial completion of one of the new blocks of flats gave Tom Posch an excellent vantage point to take these panoramas of the development of the former site of the Reichs Chancellery as it appeared in August. *Above:* **Looking north along the border of the Soviet zone with the inner security wall on the left and the restored Reichstag which lies in the British zone in the left background. The former Wilhelmstrasse (now Otto-Grotewohl-strasse runs on the right. The Führerbunker is in the centre.** *Below:* **The view east showing the demolition of the remaining cellars under the extension of the Chancellery built in 1929-30 with the old Wilhelmplatz behind. Voss-strasse lies on the right.**



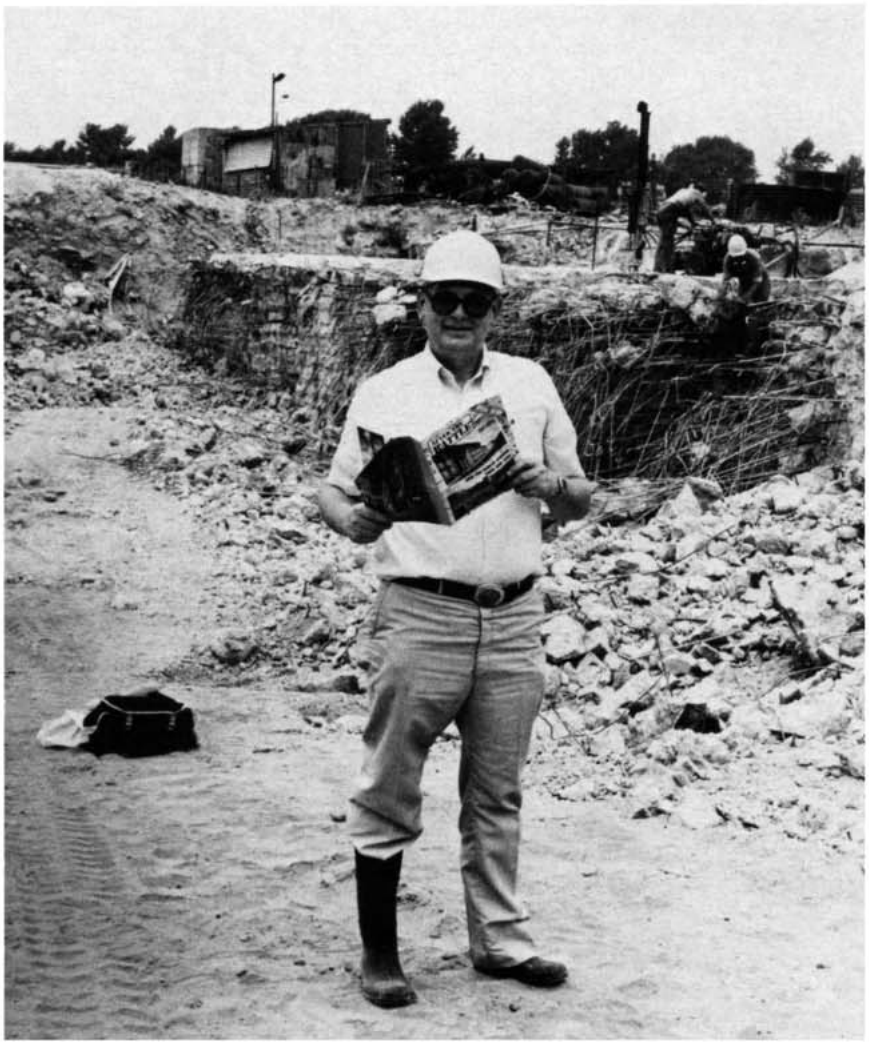
Flashback to the situation in May just as the demolition work was beginning. The Vorbunker, through which a visitor to Hitler would have to pass, lies behind the Führerbunker in the left foreground.

Since presenting our major feature on the Reichs Chancellery and the Führerbunker in Berlin in *After the Battle* No. 61, we have carried out a watching brief on the demolition of Hitler's command bunker as a significant piece of Second World War history, literally, bites the dust. We have visited the site several times over the past months where workmen have been labouring round the clock to demolish the bunker which originally lay in the grounds of the Chancellery but now stands in the middle of a new housing development in East Berlin.

Apart from its physical intrusion, (the roof would have protruded several feet above the new ground level), politically it would not have been possible for the East Germans to be seen to be preserving an important remnant of the Third Reich which would only have attracted undesirable attention once it became accessible to the general public. This stems from the fact that since 1948 it has laid buried beneath a mound of earth which has itself, following the erection of the Berlin wall in 1961, been situated in no-man's-land between the inner and outer walls. When the inner or eastern wall was moved a hundred yards or so further to the west in 1980 preparatory to the new development, the bunker site became approachable for the first time in forty years.

The Vorbunker was the first to be demolished and by August its roof had completely disappeared to be replaced by a mountainous pile of reinforcing rods. The massive party wall with the Führerbunker was then all that remained as attention switched to the southern side of Hitler's bunker. In this picture engineers set their explosive charges in a row of holes drilled in the roof of the Führerbunker in order to blow off a section. The concrete drill can be seen on the left. At this stage about half the roof has gone. After each explosion, the steelwork had to be painstakingly cut away.

As each section of the roof was blown off, the rubble dropped down to fill the water-filled rooms below. Here Tom does a little bit of publicity for us more or less on top of Eva Braun's bedroom. What is he trying to tell us, we wonder, with his one-up, one-down wellie boots!

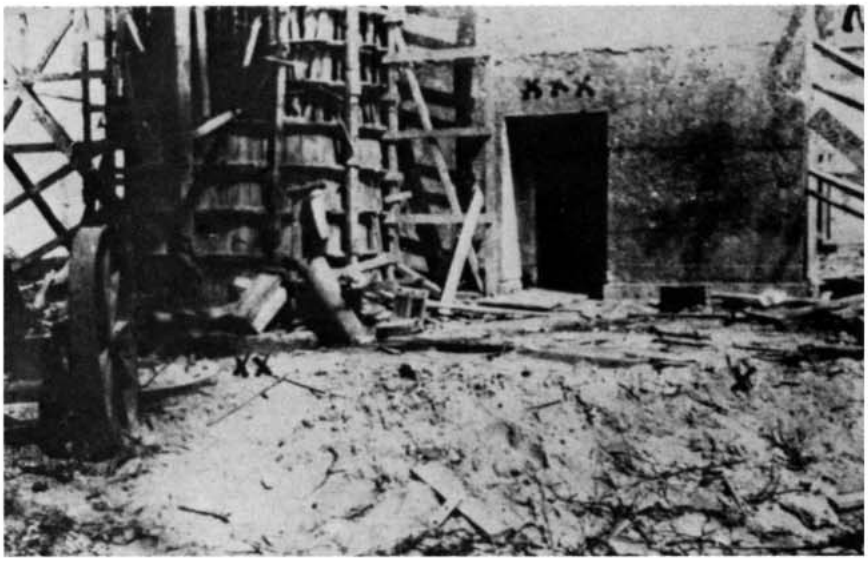


Demolition of the bunker began in May 1988 and, in the opinion of the resident engineer, would continue for six months. The method adopted was to drill a line of holes about two feet apart, from one end of the roof to the other, along one edge. Charges would then be inserted and a daily 'blow' would blast off a sliver of the three-metre-thick roof slab. The concrete rubble would be allowed to fall into the rooms below whereupon another slice would be cut from the concrete cake. After each explosion, a mass of half-inch-thick steel reinforcing rods had to be painstakingly severed individually by cutting torch. Thus, although the complex of rooms below ground still remained intact, none became visible, and it will be for a future generation to excavate and display like a Roman ruin the place where a 20th century Napoleon fought his last battle.

Tom Posch, a Dutch journalist accredited in the German Democratic Republic as correspondent for the second largest daily newspaper of the Netherlands, the *Algemeen Dagblad*, and for the Dutch radio and TV broadcasting companies, AVRO and Radio Nederland/Wereldomroep, has been our photographer during these last months, access being denied to all other western journalists. In August he returned again to record the scene in detail but by that time any trace of the Vorbunker (the adjacent bunker used as a staff annexe shelter) above ground had disappeared and half the Führerbunker had gone. One could just see into the murky, water-filled interior below the roof slab, but the rooms themselves never became visible because the method of demolition progressively filled in the rooms as the roof was brought down.

The overhead protection has been stated as being up to 16 feet thick, but if your Editor is 6 feet tall, then 10 feet is nearer the mark.

The stairwell was demolished when Soviet engineers blew off the protecting blockhouse. The crosses on this Soviet Counter Intelligence Section photo indicate the entrance 'XXX'; where Hitler's body was burned 'X' and where it was found buried 'XX'.



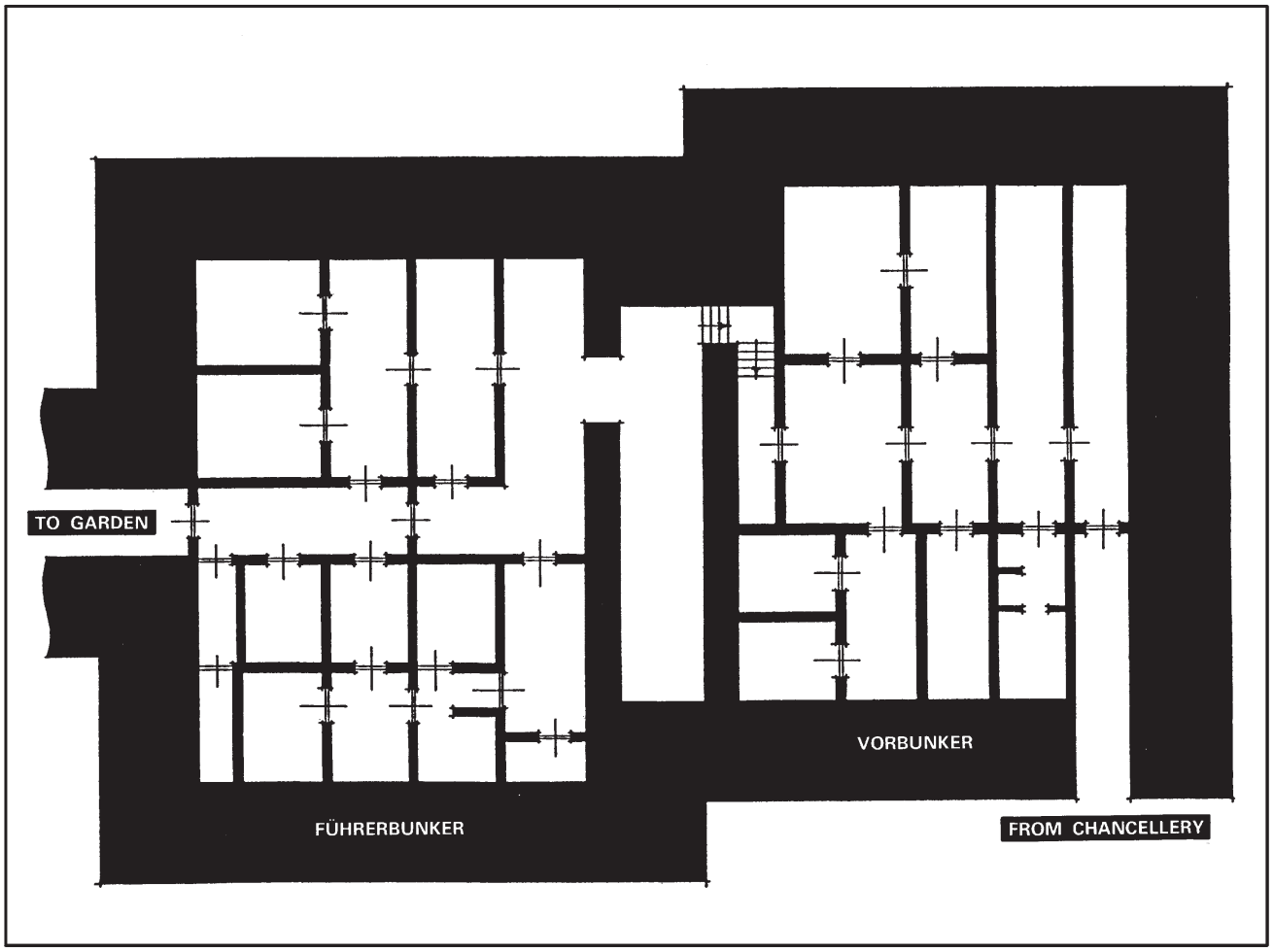
A significant feature still remaining was the stairwell up which the bodies of Hitler and his young bride had been carried. Here on a fine summer's day it was difficult to transport one's mind back to that afternoon of April 31, 1945 . . . the shells bursting all around . . . the Wagnerian overtones of the final drama as the corpses were given their Viking funeral . . . on the very spot where one now stood. Here, too, the equally macabre end of Josef Goebbels and his wife, the suicides taking place directly where one's feet crunched in the rubble.

One could not help feeling some regrets that such a significant spot in the history of the Hitler war was being so unceremoniously obliterated — and hidden from view for our generation at least — and reflect the irony of the fact that it was the legacy of a divided post-war Germany that was responsible.

One of our long-standing readers, Staff Sergeant Pete Breakspear of the 17/21 Lancers put it more succinctly in his letter from BAOR in September: 'What happened in it [the bunker] was arguably the most important thing that had taken place in recent history: the death of the man who had not only brought about the destruction of half of Europe but was responsible for the death of millions upon millions of human beings.'

Pete was actually a little disappointed over our coverage of the bunker but I explained in my reply some of the difficulties we faced. The actual Führerbunker itself could not be entered because the water level inside, caused by seepage from the River Spree 900 yards to the north, could not be lowered, and because the Russian attempt to demolish the bunker in 1947 had brought about the collapse of part of the roof beyond the doorway from the Vorbunker. In fact the explosions were probably the reason for the fracture which let in the water. The only other conceivable method of entry — down the stairwell — was also denied us as the demolitions had removed the stairs and blocked the shaft with debris. Thus it was not possible at any stage to see inside.

This comparison is from the opposite direction, for had the picture been taken from the photographer's position in July 1945, an intervening pile of rubble would have hidden the ground.



Tom's finished drawing of the Vorbunker layout married to that generally accepted of the Führerbunker. The main bone of contention concerns the stairway between the two which previous writers have stated was spiral.

Sergeant Breakspear went on to comment on the sketch of the bunker (page 31 of issue 61) which was all we could include by our August deadline pending confirmation of various measurements to enable an architect-quality drawing to be made. He wrote that 'concerning the accuracy of previous layouts of the bunker, particularly the 'Ryan' plan, I would suggest that Tom Posch has made at least one error in making his drawing. Namely in the sketch he puts the entrance to the lower bunker in the centre of a transverse corridor whilst in the picture on page 52 the doorway clearly has a wall just to the left of it. Another area that has puzzled me is the absence of the spiral staircase. All the accounts from the bunker, if they mention them, say the stairs were spiral. James O'Donnell in his book *The Berlin Bunker* says he climbed a steep iron spiral staircase. Odd don't you think?'

'I would suggest an explanation', continued Pete Breakspear. 'Comparing Tom's drawing with the photographs on page 52 of the stairs, I would say that there are two flights of steps at right angles to each other going down at most about five feet. We know from previous accounts that the difference between the two levels was certainly more than that. We also know that the roof of the lower bunker was over 16 feet thick and the upper bunker about four feet. The lower bunker was also buried much deeper. So

The stairwell *left* was under several feet of water during Tom's first visit in April. *Right:* The same view after three weeks' pumping by the East Berlin fire brigade.

there was certainly more than five feet difference between the two levels. I would say that what we are looking at in the photograph at the bottom of page 52 is not the entrance to the lounge but the doorway to the top of the stair space where the mystery spiral steps would have been. Destroyed and the space filled with rubble when the Russians attempted to demolish the bunker in 1947.'

The spiral staircase was also referred to by Patrick Sullivan in his letter to us from Woodstock, Oxfordshire: 'One of two things do seem a little doubtful as depicted in the article. Most interestingly the central "spiral" staircase is described as, so to speak, "square". However at the foot of this staircase the doorway into the Führerbunker is shown immediately in line with the staircase. This would infer a corresponding departure from what has hitherto been accepted as the layout there, as in the Vorbunker. Now the sketch of the Vorbunker quite clearly shows a lateral passageway with the entrance to the Führerbunker placed centrally, inferring the accepted layout with a central "corridor" along its length. What explanation is there of this, I wonder?'

We are now able to reproduce Tom's plan in its final form but, for reasons explained above, positive confirmation of what lies beyond the entrance at the bottom of the concrete stairway was just not possible. We have searched many sources for an original plan without success and the East German authorities say they do not have one.

Sergeant Breakspear had 'one more gasp' — the fact that he thought the typewriter we showed 'would have made a better memento than the steel helmet considering that Hitler's last testament was typed in the upper bunker and the large type machine, used so Hitler could read with his poor eyesight, was also there'.

We wholeheartedly agree but the rusted typewriter had already been earmarked by the Museum für Deutsches Geschichte in the Unten den Linden which collected it a few days later. We checked in the museum in October but could not establish whether it will be put on display when the 1933–45 gallery, currently being refurbished, is completed. We were very fortunate to be able to obtain — and retain — the relics we did which also included a nice chunk of red marble from the Chancellery and handle from a steel door.

Left: **By the end of April, Tom was able to descend the staircase but the brigade never were able to reduce the water sufficiently to enter the Führerbunker which lay at a much lower level.** *Right:* **As soon as the pumps were removed the water rose again to the top of the ceiling, this picture being taken in August when the interior beneath the Führerbunker roof became visible.**

Other than lumps of rusted metal, souvenirs were thin on the ground. *Centre:* **This was a lucky find after being under water — a fragment from a burned telephone directory.** *Left:* **A handle from a steel door but,** *right*, **even better, a 90mm-thick lump of red marble left behind when the Chancellery was pulled down. We were told that the stone from the building had been used as ballast for the repair of railway tracks in East Berlin when it was demolished in the 1950s.**

Several readers contacted us with details of other Führerbunker/Reich Chancellery relics. Mr C. E. Horn wrote from Jersey with photocopies of several documents obtained 'from an old major who still lives in Jersey and who believes he was the first British officer into the Chancellery. Obviously he took various bits and pieces as he went around the building. One is a nice ink blotter which he swears he took from the room with the table with the marble top by which one presumes was Hitler's office. It was partiallly covered with a large piece of broken marble from the table which had been smashed by Russians with sledge hammers. He also took various items of stationery.'

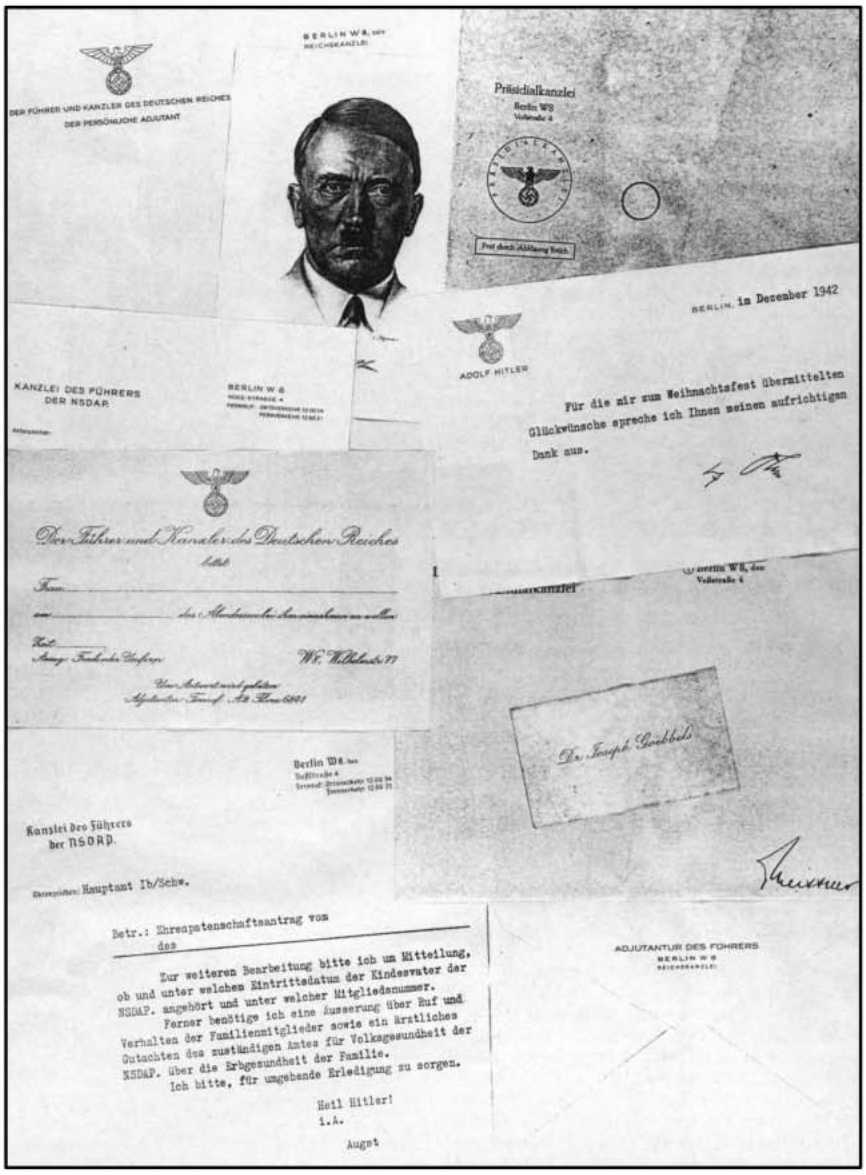
Recently on display at the Imperial War Museum in London was the diary found by Lieutenant Colonel J. L. McCowen when he visited the bunker with Brigadier S. G. Galpin on September 10, 1945. Rooting around in the darkness, by the light of his torch he saw a leather covered book pushed down the side of a couch. On inspection he saw it covered Hitler's engagements each day from October 14, 1944 through to February 28, 1945 — a valuable find documenting the Fuhrer's movements during the period of the Ardennes offensive.

Returning to the bunker the following day, Colonel McCowen picked up a long narrow diary, on which he recognised the handwriting of Heinz Linge, Hitler's valet, in a small room next to Hitler's private suite. Both items were passed to the IWM from the Cabinet Office in 1972.

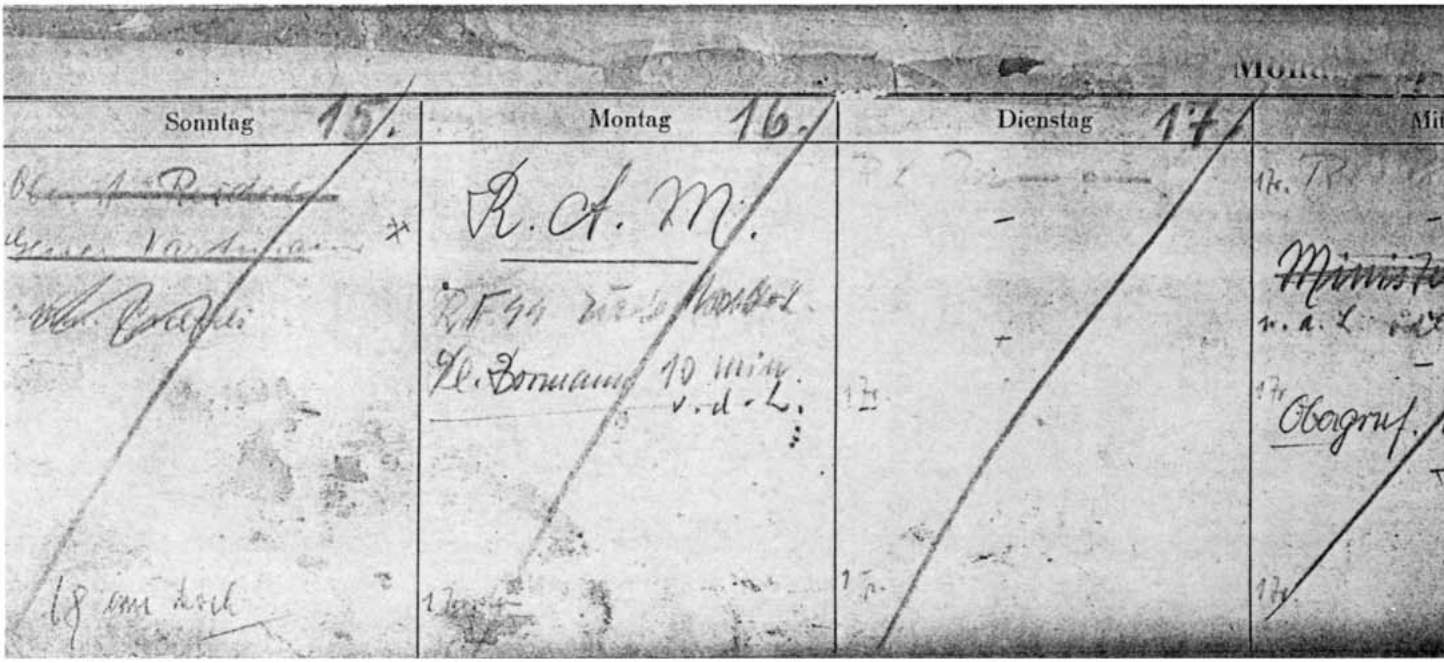
Another unique prize was taken by a Russian officer on May 2, 1945, and was later presented to Marshal Zhukov who in turn passed it to the museum at Karlshorst where the German surrender was signed (*see After the Battle No. 48*). This was an ordinary tourist map on which Hitler had recorded the Russian advance — the last situation map of the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht!

Then Mr J. F. Allbone of Canley, Coventry, raised the point that in issue 61 we had not mentioned 'the secret room mentioned in the article on "Dixie" Dean in *True Detective* where many bodies were found sprawled round a table in the bunker which suggested that a big party had taken place before all the diners had killed themselves by poisoning.'

This particular story appeared in *True Detective* in 1979, Edward G. Dean — always known as 'Dixie', being a top photographer with the *Daily Mirror*. In the article, Dixie recounted several murders that he had



A nice genuine set of paperwork collected in 1945 and now owned by Mr Horn in Jersey.



covered as Fleet Street's No. 1 crime photographer and then went on to describe the incident in Berlin:

'But perhaps the eeriest experience of my life came during the war years when, with other photographers attached to Field Marshal Montgomery's Army Group, I was rushed to Berlin to photograph Hitler's bunker under the Berlin Chancellery, where he had made his last diehard stand and taken his own life, one jump ahead of the advancing Russians.

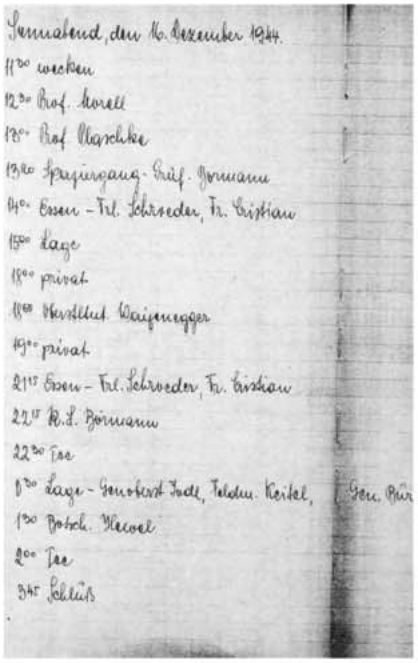
'The Russians were already in residence at the Chancellery when we arrived. We were assigned guides by them, then taken into the fire-gutted, swamped hospital and the personal bedrooms of Hitler and his mistress Eva Braun, where I managed to get hold of some of her diaries.

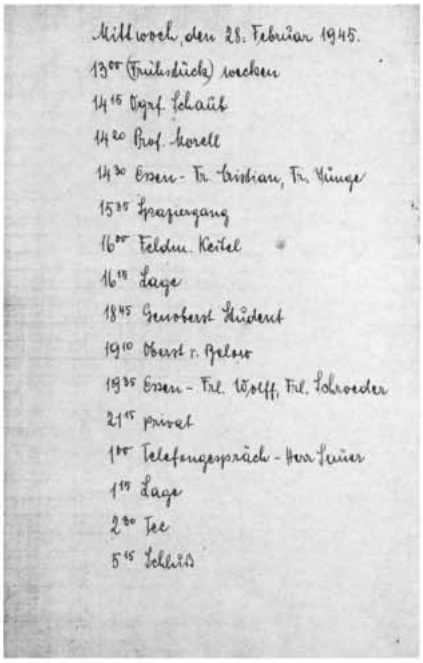
'A colleague (who shall be nameless) cut a priceless art treasure from its frame, rolled it up, and stuck it in his pocket. Then Colonel Boris, our guide, handed me a set of Hitler's personal crested entree dishes. My son Paul, a crime reporter and columnist in Phoenix, Arizona, now has these. I was also given one of Hitler's personal standards from behind a bunker desk — and was later to sleep in it, much to the amusement of other war correspondents, on cold nights. As an aside, its home is now on Blackpool's Golden Mile!

'But it was a little door off a passage in the bunker which was to yield an untold secret. Boris paused, puzzled by it. He had obviously not noticed it before, or might have thought it was a cupboard. He tried the handle, but it seemed to be locked from the inside. Undeterred, Boris signalled to a Russian private hovering nearby, who unslung his Moisin rifle and fired at the lock. A hefty kick from Boris's polished jackboot completed this door-opening ceremony — and we stepped into something straight out of Dante's Inferno, lit by a power source still functioning somewhere.

'It was a frozen tableau of horror for, sitting round a huge dining-table, were half a dozen high-ranking Nazi war criminals and their wives and mistresses who had poisoned themselves in a macabre "last supper" rather than face the Russians and an immediate firing squad, the rope — or worse.

'One elderly officer had taken off his medal ribbons and Iron Cross and flung them to the floor. A hand, stiffened in death, had a broken wineglass in it, congealed blood running through his fingers to the white tablecloth. Another, in the black and silver


Samstag, den 16. Dezember 1944.
11[30] wecken
12[30] Prof. Morell
13[00] Prof. Haenschke
13[30] Spaziergang - Chef. Bormann
14[00] Essen - Frl. Schroeder, Fr. Christian
15[00] Lage
18[00] privat
18[00] Oberstlt. Weisenegger
19[00] privat
21[15] Essen - Frl. Schroeder, Fr. Christian
22[15] R.L. Bormann
22[30] Tee
1[30] Lage - Generaloberst Jodl, Feldm. Keitel, Gen. Burgdorf
1[30] Besch. Vlecvel
2[00] Tee
3[45] Schluß


Mittwoch, den 28. Februar 1945.
13[00] (Frühstück) wecken
14[15] Ogrf. Schaub
14[20] Prof. Morell
14[30] Essen - Fr. Christian, Fr. Junge
15[35] Spaziergang
16[00] Feldm. Keitel
16[15] Lage
18[45] Generaloberst Student
19[10] Oberst v. Below
19[35] Essen - Frl. Wolff, Frl. Schroeder
21[15] privat
1[00] Telefongespräch - Herr Fegelein
1[15] Lage
2[30] Tee
5[15] Schluß

Of immense value to historians is Hitler's daily schedule *above* and appointments pad *below* — this extract shows part of April 1945 — which was found in the bunker four months after it was ransacked by all and sundry following its capture. (IWM)

finery of the SS, had his lips snarled back in a death rictus, a cigar still between his fingers on the table. It had been still burning when he died and had charred the insides of his fingers to the bone. His consort — a tall, patrician woman in a full white evening gown, with tiara and necklace to match — had fallen against his shoulder. In the moment of sudden death, her upper dentures had been forced halfway out of her mouth, giving her features a skeletal look.

'Some diners had died instantly, stiff-backed in their chairs. Others had panicked at the last moment or twisted round in their seats, as if seeking escape or help.

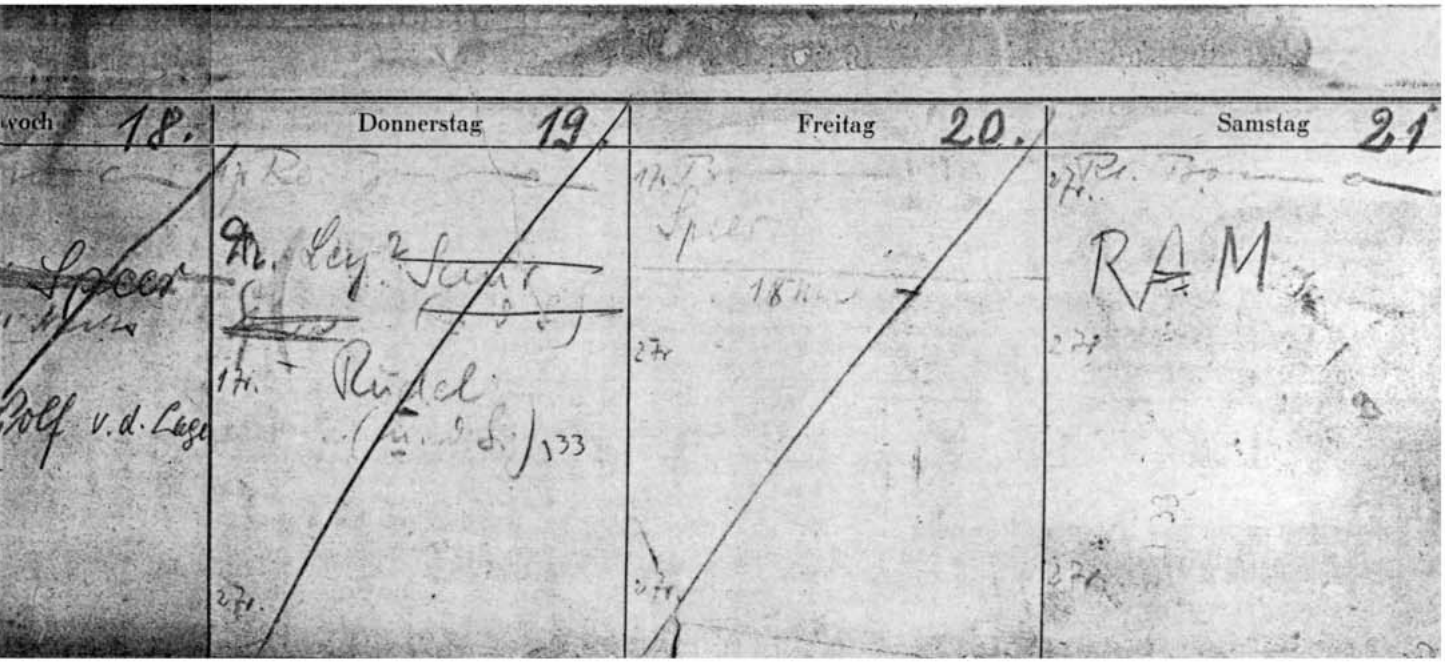
'One officer was sprawled over the table. Another very young, but high-ranking, officer and a beautiful brunette in a red gown held hands in death across the table, staring sightlessly into each other's eyes.

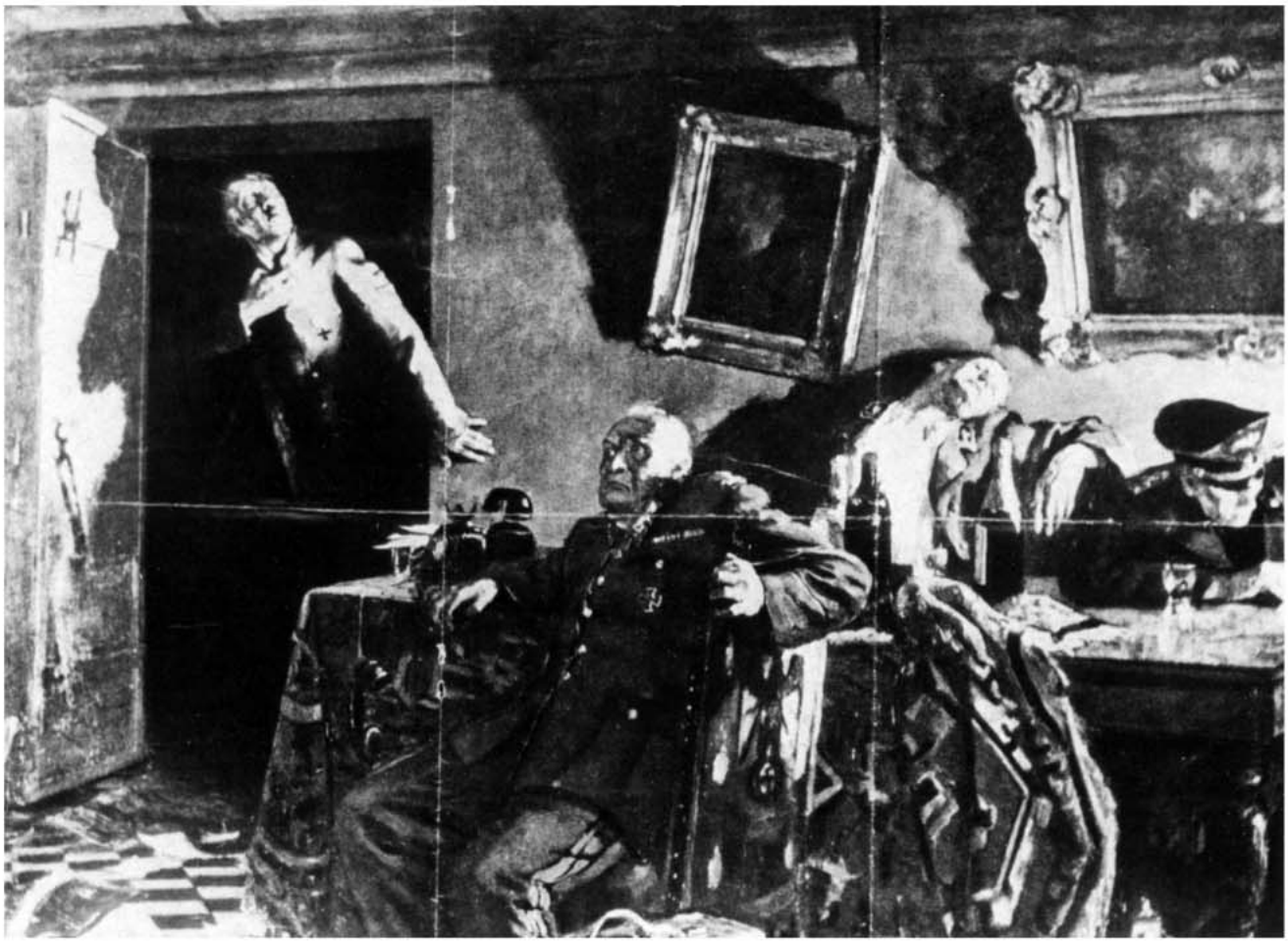
Scattered round the cloth between the dead diners were small phials of poison — similar to plastic lighter fuel capsules — and boxes of white tablets.

'I reflect sometimes on just who that elite clique were. Most of the Nazi leaders and General Staff officers were well-known, but those faces around that table were all strangers to me, yet of high rank. Perhaps, like Martin Bormann, Hitler's deputy, they were among the "faceless ones", some of whom fled to South America rather than face a War Crimes Commission, and only became internationally notorious many years later, like Adolf Eichmann and Josef Mengele.

'I walked to one end of the room, gagging at the sweet smell of death blending with the women's perfume, and reached under my armpit for the camera. But Colonel Boris saw me and shook his head vehemently, crying out: "Niet! . . . Niet!"

'Suddenly, the room was full of Red Army men, ugly-looking Mongolian or Tartar shock-troops. One of them placed the barrel





Could the scene witnessed by Dixie Dean have been the inspiration behind this Russian painting?

of his rifle across my throat and snatched the camera from me.

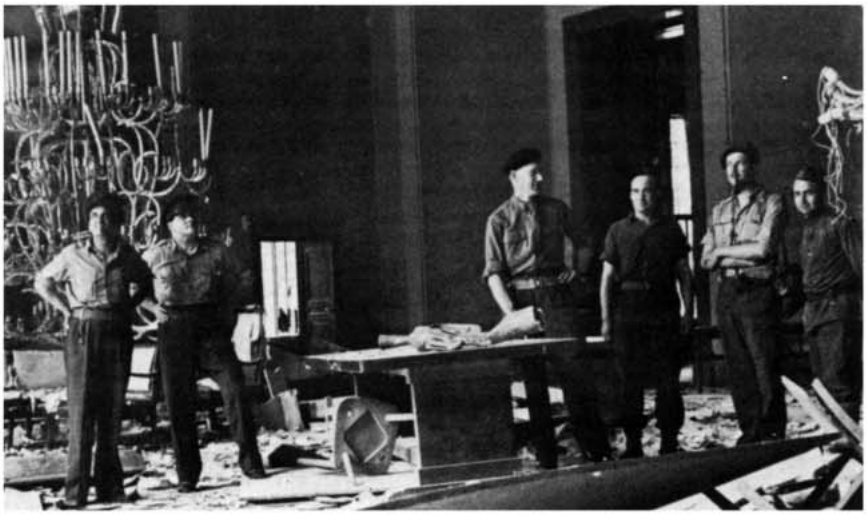
'He tossed it to the Colonel, who broke out the film and threw the camera back at me with a stiff bow. Boris was no longer our smiling guide of the last few hours.

'I looked again at the table, the stale food, the rotting fruit, the faces grey-blue and bloated in near putrefaction as we backed out awe-stricken from the scene.

'Boris was transferred next day and I never saw him again. Next time we looked at that secret door — I remember the late Richard Dimbleby was with me — there was an armed Mongolian sentry on it. Whatever mystery that last supper held, the Russians retain the secret. And, after we left, they probably took the only pictures of that fanatical farewell to the Führer.'

The scene as described by Dean does not appear in any of the authorative accounts covering the final hours in the bunker nor is it recorded by any of the survivors since their release from Soviet prison camps. Did it really happen?

The *True Detective* article was not in fact written by Dean but by Richard Walton and we spoke to him in France. He said that the



Richard Dimbleby (second left) in the Grosser Emfangsaal of the Chancellery. He, too, obtained some souvenirs: knives, forks, and spoons with the initials 'A.H.' which he later provided at dinner parties for people he didn't like!

In this room were hatched many of the major plots of National Socialism. It was, in its time, a grand — almost overbearingly grand apartment; a huge, high chamber with brown marble walls on which great tapestries were hung. Those tapestries now have disappeared into the rubble and the chaos that lie along the marble floor, making it with the dust that lies powdered on it so slippery that you have to pick your way across. Here by the window where Hitler sat and Hitler worked, I found his chair and I am sitting in that chair now. What's left of it is just the back, which has been ripped up; it looks as though it was done by bayonets. The tapestried seat and one broken arm. And by its side, turned upside down and crashed on to the floor, is his great marble desk, fifteen feet long and five feet wide.

That is where Hitler worked. Today it lies in the filth and the rubble that are bound in every corner of this huge building in Berlin.

RICHARD DIMBLEBY,
BBC BROADCAST, JULY 4, 1945

'secret room' anecdote was one that Dixie had recounted many times around Fleet Street and that he had no reason to doubt its authenticity. He said he could see no point in Dixie inventing such a story although Richard agreed it was sensational. We also discussed it with Mike James, Assistant Editor on *True Detective* in 1979, who was responsible for running the feature, and he admitted to having some degree of scepticism at the time although again there was no real reason to believe that Dixie had not recounted what he saw.

Dixie mentioned Richard Dimbleby, the BBC war correspondent and post-war commentator, whose reputation for factual reporting is impeccable (except perhaps for the famous harvest of the spaghetti trees in his spoof interview one April 1!). Dimbleby spent five weeks in Berlin in July and August 1945 and sent 144 despatches to Britain of which only 9 were crowded out or rejected. He visited Hitler's study on Wednesday, July 4 and recorded a piece — the only one which he appears to have been made at the Chancellery — which was broadcast at 9.00 p.m. that evening.

Richard Dimbleby died in 1965 but we contacted his son Jonathan who has since researched and written a biography of his father. He said he had not come across any account of a secret room or any reference concerning the Dean account, but he felt that with his father's nose for a good story, there was no way that he would not have mentioned it at some time or other if he had knowledge of it. As far as he knew his father had made no recordings in the bunker itself which in any case would have been rather difficult in the darkness.

Thus Dixie's secret room remains his secret. Possibly it was something he saw in one of the many other rooms and cellars beneath the Chancellery . . . possibly we shall never know.

Our final visit to Berlin was made just prior to our press deadline for this issue. In mid-October we found that nothing at all remained visible of the Führerbunker with a final short section of the party wall with the Vorbunker in the process of being attacked by a tracked excavator. By the time you read this all will have been expunged, the final step being to landscape the spot with six foot of soil prior to the area being flooded to form an ornamental lake.

The final chapter . . . written in the dust of Berlin in October 1988. The six-month 'battle of the bunker' is all but over and the Führerbunker all but gone.